

# Socialist Worker

For a socialist alternative to New Labour

80p

THEIR EUROPE AND OURS

## Behind the rows over the euro

## Strikes sweep across France

pages 3, 5 and 7

### THE REVOLT OF THE LOW PAID

'Our wages won't pay the bills'

page 16

### FOURTEEN DEAD. NOTHING SAID

Scandal of deaths at work

pages 8 &amp; 9



Striking at Cleanaway

## Binning strike busters

A multinational corporation broke the law to try and undermine a strike against poverty pay last week.

Cleanaway, part of the giant Brambles corporation, faced a week-long strike by 150 bin workers demanding an increased London weighting allowance.

The workers get a basic pay of just £200 a week.

Cleanaway has the refuse contract with the New Labour council in Tower Hamlets, east London.

The firm tried to undermine the strike by using strikebreakers from employment agencies. This is illegal—and Cleanaway must have known it.

Employment agencies are banned under a 1973 act from supplying workers "as direct replacement for employees who are in industrial dispute".

The workers' TGWU union forced the agencies to withdraw the strikebreakers.

Cleanaway then turned up at the local job centre with leaflets offering unemployed people jobs—at double the hourly rate they paid the striking workers.

The strikers went to the dole office. Workers in the PCS union there took up the issue and the leaflets were removed.

But all Cleanaway's grubby efforts came to nothing. The strike was solid, and rubbish piled up across the borough.

Workers are now keeping up an overtime ban to win decent pay.

Solidarity helped beat the strikebreaking, and solidarity can beat privateers like Cleanaway and the councils who back them.

As well as local civil servants, council workers, teachers, local tube workers and others all visited the bin workers' picket lines last week.

"We all have the same problems, we should all be out together," said one striker.

## BOMBS WERE HIS WEAPON IN IRAQ

# A KILLER COMES TO EUROPE

## Debt is his weapon against the world's poorest people

**GEORGE BUSH, the butcher of Iraq, is arriving in Europe this weekend.**

He is flying into Evian in France to meet with his fellow leaders of the "G8" richest industrial countries.

He comes determined to hammer home his victory in Iraq—even though every day there are reports of more deaths and killings in the country he claims to have liberated.

He also wants to hammer out an agreement with the other leaders to collect debts from the poorest countries in the world.

Five years ago in Birmingham the G8 leaders promised that they would massively reduce the debts of Third World countries.

That was a lie. Debt is still the weapon governments and bankers wield at the poor.

Some 19,000 children still die every single day because money

is spent on repaying debts.

Bush also wants the other leaders to help him push through massive privatisation programmes when the World Trade Organisation meets in Cancun in Mexico in September.

Everyone should support the protests against war and debt which will greet Bush as he jets into Evian this weekend.

■ **For more on the new horrors in Iraq turn to page 2.**

## NEWS

## Credit for walkout

"SEVEN WEEKS without money. Minimum wage. Drowning in debt. No money to feed kids."

That's how one woman summed up the impact of the chaos gripping the government's system for paying tax credits.

The means-tested credits are the centrepiece of Chancellor Gordon Brown's welfare plans.

But thousands of people are being left in poverty by delays and chaos.

Last Friday staff at Inland Revenue offices in Scotland, north east England and Manchester administering the credits stopped work for 15 minutes in protest at the chaos.

They say the government and management are to blame, and sympathise with the people suffering from the delay.

Full story—page 15

## A key press battle

JOURNALISTS WORKING for local papers owned by the Newsquest conglomerate in Bradford were due to start an all-out strike over pay this week.

The company owned by US multinational Gannett is taking a hard line in the face of a growing revolt by low-paid journalists across the media industry.

Journalists have been organising, winning back union rights, and taking action to boost pay.

The stakes are high in the Bradford fight. If Newsquest wins it will set back the National Union of Journalists across the industry. If the strikers win it will show how hard-nosed bosses can be taken on and beaten.

Full story—page 13

## Make votes count

CIVIL SERVANTS in the PCS union will start voting in elections for their national executive next week.

The union had long dominated by a right wing grouping, which last year tried to launch a coup to prevent socialist Mark Serwotka taking up office after members elected him as general secretary.

A members revolt saw that coup off, and made sure Mark took up his position. Now the national executive elections give members a chance to build on that victory and change the union's leadership throughout.

PCS president Janice Godrich explains the importance of the vote on page 13

## Revolts on low pay

THOUSANDS OF nursery nurses in Scotland were striking again this week in a fight against low pay.

The action is the latest in a planned series of stoppages. It follows last week's Scotland-wide strike which saw up to 5,000 nursery nurses strike, picket and demonstrate.

Meanwhile in England, health workers from Scunthorpe to east London also face a new series of battles over low pay.

Strikes were due to get underway as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

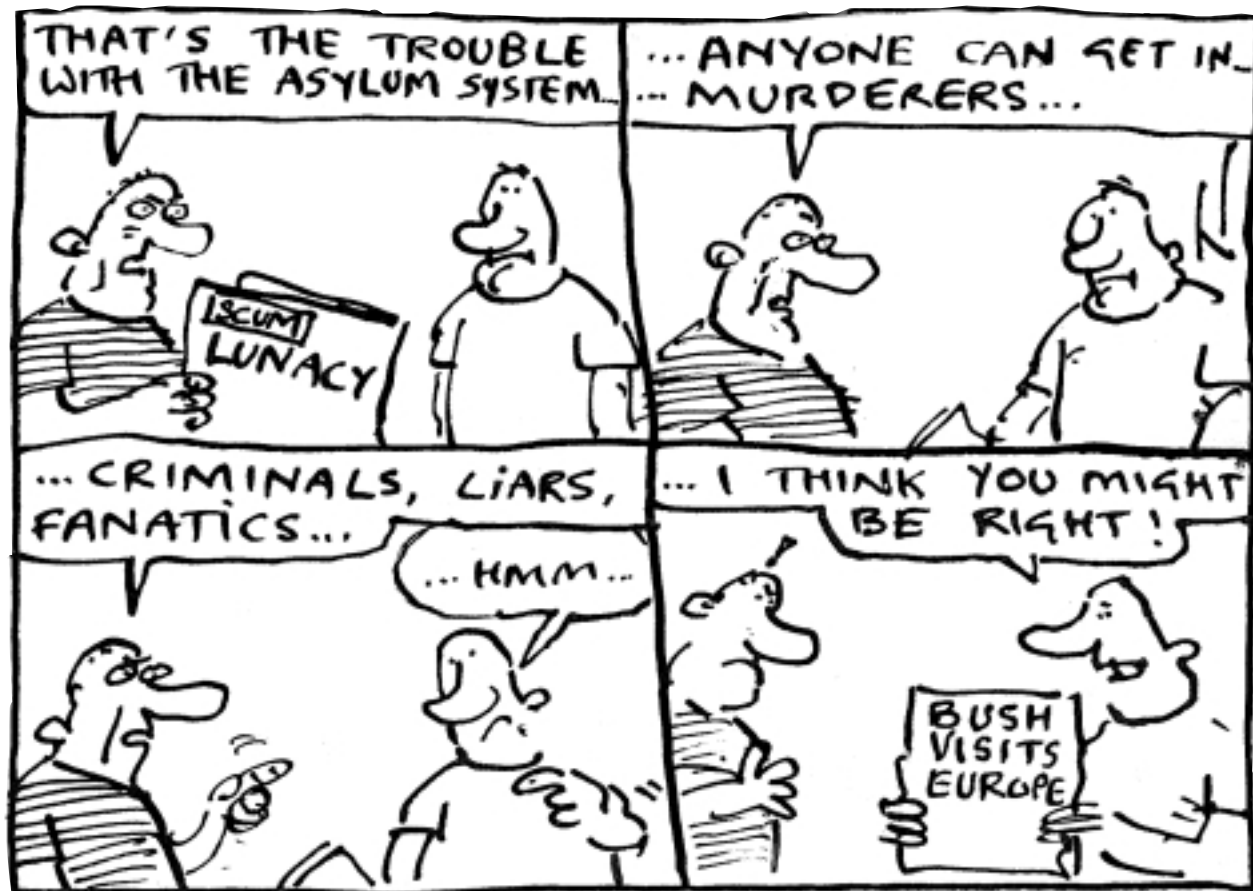
Full story—page 16

## Socialist Worker

E-mail reports@socialistworker.co.uk  
Web www.socialistworker.co.uk  
Editorial 020 7538 0828  
Circulation 020 7538 3305  
National office 020 7538 5821  
Industrial dept 020 7987 1919

All correspondence to PO Box 82, London E3 3LH

Published weekly except final week of December. Published and printed by Larkham Printers and Publishers Ltd (TU all departments). Registered as a newspaper with the Royal Mail.



# Occupation brings new horror to Iraq

*Six weeks after we were told the war on Iraq was over, the killing of civilians goes on.*

HUNDREDS OF people have been shot dead in Iraq over the last three weeks. They are the victims of both US patrols and of rival gangs who have exploited the power vacuum created by the occupying powers.

The UN children's agency UNICEF also warns that the humanitarian crisis in the country is getting worse—with continuing blackouts, untreated sewage pouring into drinking water, food shortages and epidemics.

Alex Renton, Oxfam's spokesperson in Iraq, says the US is "in breach of its obligations under the Geneva convention" to prevent looting, particularly of

medical supplies.

An Willens of Medecins Sans Frontieres says, "The Americans say now they could not have foreseen the problem of looting medical supplies."

"But we had been telling them about this risk since just after the war started."

Dr Hamas Assad Walid works on the paediatric ward of Khadessia Hospital in Thawra City, a shanty town of four million Shia Muslims on the outskirts of Baghdad.

He says, "We have been seeing some 1,000 patients a day and taking in about 60 to 70 a day—turning away hundreds of children."

The hospital is full. The first children are now dying from dehydration and gastroenteritis, and from the first cases of jaundice and suspected cholera.

While children are starved of medicine in Iraq, Western companies are queuing up for a feeding frenzy of reconstruction

contracts.

The deals will be paid for from Iraq's oil industry, which is now in the hands of the US and Britain.

●THE US is illegally holding thousands of Iraqi prisoners of war and denying them access to human rights officials.

The International Committee of the Red Cross says it has been denied access to as many as 3,000 prisoners held at compounds close to Baghdad international airport.

A camera operator for the France 3 TV channel was taken there as a prisoner.

Leo Nicolian has papers signed by a lieutenant Brad Fisher acknowledging he was wrongly arrested.

Nicolian was held in a converted tennis court along with 50 other prisoners.

On his way out he said he passed a bigger encampment and saw hundreds of men hooded, with their arms tied behind their backs.

## 'We live in prison and without hope'

THE OCCUPATION is such a disaster that even some of those who were forced out of their homes under Saddam Hussein for opposing his regime say rule by the US is at least as bad.

Mother of six Sabrir Hassan Ismael has now been forced to take shelter in the abandoned Khan Bani Saad prison.

It is filled with families who are victims, not of the war, but of the US-ruled peace.

"Look at me," she told journalists. "Look at my family. We live in prison. We can't buy food because we don't have money. We have no gas to cook."

"We can't sleep because it's very hot. There are huge insects that bite us."

"All night my daughters cry and they can't sleep. I live without hope."

Mrs Sabrir is a member of the Arab Saraefien tribe.

Its opposition to Saddam Hussein led to large numbers

of them being deported from the south of Iraq to the north to "Arabise" areas the Kurds had been driven from.

Mrs Sabrir welcomed the US invasion. But two days after the fall of Saddam Kurdish paramilitaries entered her town and forced all 15,000 Arabs to leave within 48 hours.

The tribe's chief says, "The Americans promised us food and medicine and freedom."

"But we have lost our homes, our land, our crops."

### Protest at George Galloway's suspension from the Labour Party

9.10am, Tuesday 10 June outside Labour's NEC meeting at Labour Party headquarters, Old Queen Street, London SW1 (St James's Park/Westminster ☎)

## IN BRIEF

## Now jobs axe hits schools

UP TO 1,600 jobs to go in schools. That's the reality behind education secretary Charles Clarke's claim that he has sorted out the schools funding crisis.

Clarke tried to wrongly blame local education authorities for holding back government cash from schools.

In fact, most authorities spend more on education than the government budgets for.

Still, according to a National Union of Teachers (NUT) survey of 86 authorities 900 jobs are going with 320 at risk.

Across all 150 authorities in England that would translate into 1,570 job losses and 560 at risk.

Last week pupils at Edenham High School in Croydon, south London, were sent home after the head said he could not pay for supply teachers to cover lessons.

A primary school head in Norfolk has put himself on a four-day week to try to ease its budget shortfall.

In many areas the crisis is fuelling calls for a fight to get the government to pay up.

Many parents and teachers are telling local papers that the £3.5 billion spent on the war on Iraq would have been far better spent on education.

## Return of the pawnbrokers

INCREASING DEBT levels are forcing people to turn to pawnbrokers to raise cash for bills.

A Citizens Advice Bureau report released last week found a significant proportion of the UK population were grappling with unmanageable debt.

The amount owed by more than 900 Citizens Advice Bureau clients surveyed over a monthly period averaged nearly 14 times their monthly income.

Around a quarter were receiving treatment from their GP for stress, depression and anxiety.

## Taking money and running

NEW LABOUR justifies handing out huge sums to fat cats saying that bosses create the jobs.

Perhaps they could explain how that applies to bosses at electrical firm LG Philips and paper company Arjo Wiggins.

LG Philips was given £220 million to build a factory producing colour tubes for computer screens and TV monitors, in Newport, South Wales, which would create 6,100 jobs.

Seven years on, part of the factory has never opened and just 870 of the jobs promised have been created.

These jobs are now set to be axed anyway along with a further 71 jobs at the firm's Southport plant.

Paper company Arjo Wiggins recently pocketed a £5 million grant from the Department of Trade and Industry after promising a jobs boost.

And now, guess what—it plans to dump a third of its workforce.

# ANTI IMPERIALISM

a guide for the movement

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# His face answers the lies about refugees

IF ANYONE believed the government's assault on asylum seekers leaves the most desperate "legitimate" refugees untouched, look at Abas Amini's face.

The Home Office is appealing against a decision to give him asylum in Britain. He is so desperate he has sewn up his own eyes, mouth and ears in protest.

Abas is a 33 year old Iranian Kurdish poet. He has faced imprisonment, torture and persecution for his political beliefs and writing in Iran, a country which the press has lined up to criticise over human rights.

He arrived in Britain two years ago after escaping from prison.

The government wants to send him back to Iran where he believes he will be executed.

"I don't know what I have to do any more for my situation to be resolved so I can live like a human being," Abas said through closed lips. "Shouldn't a human being have a square foot of earth to live on in peace?"

He is the just one of the victims of the bigoted campaign against asylum seekers which the right wing press spews out daily and home secretary David Blunkett caves in to.

■ E-mail messages of support for Abas Amini to [jorobdamsam@aol.com](mailto:jorobdamsam@aol.com)

Picture: Page One

## Euro con from both sides

**EVERYONE SHOULD smell a rat when Rupert Murdoch's Sun claims to care about mass sackings of workers.**

Billionaire Murdoch is responsible for massacring many thousands of jobs in the print industry here and abroad.

But Tuesday's *Sun* had the nerve to play on fears of redundancy in order to whip up pro George Bush hysteria over Europe.

The euro row for the mainstream media and politicians is a bitter feud between rival multimillionaires and the groupings that back them.

This week they were obsessed with a proposed constitution for the European Union and whether to have a referendum on it.

The right wing papers, along with the Tories, are denouncing the constitution. They claim they are standing up for the rights of people in Britain.

But the super-rich owners of the *Mail*, *Telegraph* and *Sun* don't give a

damn about the rights of working people—they hate unions and have opposed every strike.

The businessmen in Britain who back the Murdoch line say closer integration into Europe will give workers here TOO MANY rights.

As for democracy, all the euro-sceptic rabble backed the drive for war on Iraq even though most people in Britain were against it.

The *Sun* let the truth slip when it claimed the new euro constitution will bring "a European foreign minister who can order us not to support our American friends ever again". Unfortunately, it won't mean that.

And New Labour's defence of the constitution is that it doesn't give people any more rights.

The Blairites crow about the way they will continue to crack down on everything from pensions to people fleeing persecution.

Both sides want to restrict the right of workers to take action over jobs and conditions.

Millions of people across Europe have been forced to defend themselves against attacks on welfare.

Austria has seen its biggest national strike since 1945. Protests have swept Germany and strikes are threatened.

France has seen a rising wave of strikes against its right wing government, with a possible general strike

next week.

It is these struggles that show the real divide in Europe and in this country.

They, and the Evian protests against George Bush and the G8 this weekend, show the hope for an alternative social Europe to the one both Rupert Murdoch and euro supporters like Peter Mandelson want.

## We need some of this

**BRITAIN HASN'T yet seen the same revolts as other European countries.**

But the same feeling against attacks on pensions and workers' rights exists here. Opposition to New Labour is growing.

Last week the CWU union voted to kick out their pro-Blair deputy general secretary John Keggie.

The election result for general secretary of the TGWU union, Britain's second biggest union with 900,000 members, was set to be announced

on Friday of this week.

All of the candidates have made an effort to distance themselves from Blair. That includes Jack Dromey, who wanted to be a New Labour MP in 1997 and was Blair's favoured candidate.

Still the government feared a left wing candidate would win.

The feeling shown in union elections has to be transferred into a fight over pensions, better pay, privatisation and all the other issues that affect workers.

Imperialism today: is the US unstoppable? **What would socialism be like?** Does the movement need political parties? **How do ideas change?** Is Labour just another Tory party? **Do Western workers benefit from Third World oppression?** Is racism getting worse? **What makes you working class?** What sort of cities do we want? **What is historical materialism?** Is Chavez the new hope for Latin America? **Can Palestine be free?**

## We've all got questions Together we've got answers

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comment

# Two thugs aren't better than one

ONE OF the biggest talking points of the past few months has concerned where the war on Iraq leaves relations between Europe and the US.

Many people on the left have been speculating that the European Union (EU) can, under French and German leadership, emerge as a counterweight to the US.

One of the most remarkable examples is provided by paper written by Bernard assen, the dominant figure in TTAC, the French movement campaigning for the regulation of financial markets.

Cassen acknowledges that French president Jacques Chirac, along with his prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, is implementing vicious neo-liberal policies in France.

The most notable are the attacks on pensions that have been provoking such resistance. Still, Cassen muses, How, in France, to support Chirac abroad while fighting Chirac at home?"

He goes on to wonder whether or not ATTAC could support the proposals for European defence put forward by France, Germany, and Belgium.

"Confronted with an American strategy based on the discretionary use of force," assen argues, "the movement or another world can't practise an ostrich-like policy with regard to defence."

This is very close to saying that the answer to US militarism is European militarism. his conjures up the terrifying prospect of a new arms race.

Or rather it would, were there any prospect of the French and Germans pursuing consistent policy of challenging US hegemony. But last week in New York they rumbled in the face of the Anglo-American conquest of Iraq and voted for a United Nations Security Council resolution legitimising the country's occupation.

## Frenzy

The US and Britain have been recognised as the occupying "authority" and given control over the country's oil revenues.

In exchange, they have agreed to consult over how they spend the money and have accepted a higher-status UN representative in Iraq.

These concessions amount to little more than a fig leaf concealing the imposition of a US colonial regime.

On both sides of the Atlantic conferences organised by Bechtel, one of the main US contractors in Iraq, have revoked a positive feeling, as thousands of companies fight to get their snouts into the trough.

The collapse of the anti-war front at the UN doesn't mean that the conflicts before he war have disappeared.

Next year the EU will be joined by ten new states, most of them ex-Stalinist countries in Eastern and Central Europe. Most of their governments are desperate to prove their pro-American credentials.

Donald Rumsfeld's infamous invocation of "New Europe" against France and Germany was much more

**ALEX CALLINICOS says a Euro army won't make the world safer**

than mere rhetoric. Philip Stephens wrote in the *Financial Times* recently:

"The new organising principle of US foreign policy is to assemble coalitions of the willing and of the coerced behind the projection of American power... Seen from Washington, a cohesive Europe is one tempted to answer back.

"A divided one cannot challenge US power."

One sign of this strategy has been the US decision to ask Poland to take responsibility for one zone in Iraq.

## Shunned

When Germany made it clear that the Polish government couldn't expect the EU to pay for their troops in Iraq, Washington said it would find the cash.

Meanwhile, as Stephens puts it, "France is to be punished, Germany shunned and Russia brought into the fold... Mr Bush still refuses to take a telephone call from Gerhard Schröder." This is a naked policy of divide and rule.

The same viewpoint is even more strongly expressed by David Marquand in last week's *New Statesman*. Marquand is a leading figure in the old Labour extreme right.

Pro-European and pro-US, he followed Roy Jenkins to Brussels when the latter became President of the European Commission and then into the Social Democratic Party.

More recently, Marquand provided much of what amounts to intellectual substance in the ideology of New Labour.

But now Marquand denounces "the chauvinistic utopianism" of the Bush administration and declares that "Tony Blair's shameful disloyalty to his fellow Europeans has ensured that, for the foreseeable future, the European Union will not be a serious force in global politics."

Funnily enough, he ends up in the same place as Cassen, hoping that "a Franco-Russo-German bloc" may end up as "an alternative pole of power" to the US.

This is a recipe for a return to the inter-imperialist rivalries that produced the two world wars.

What we want instead is a genuinely different world where the hold of the great capitalist powers now fighting over the spoils of Iraq is finally broken.

## IN THE FRAME

**No. 12 MARGARET HODGE**

The education minister, and one time Labour left, has endorsed fees of up to £10,000 for top universities.

She says that since most people who go to places like Oxford or Cambridge are from better off families, higher fees should be levied.

Charging £10,000 will certainly ensure that only the elite go to those universities.

## Swiss bankers go incognito

PANIC SET in among the high flying bankers of Geneva in the run-up to the G8 summit across the border in Evian, France.

The prospect of anti-capitalist mobilisations pushed the Swiss bankers to abandon sharp suits and dress down.

UBS, Switzerland's largest bank, explains that "a special situation calls for special measures".

## Birt's empty blue skies

THERE WAS a great fanfare when Tony Blair appointed Lord Birt to come up with "blue skies" ideas.

The former director general of the BBC was meant to come up with radical new policies.

Two years on and Birt has come up with precisely one proposal. It was for a network of toll motorways, which was rejected out of hand by transport secretary Alistair Darling.

## Just giving a helping hand

THE Congressman who rewrote US tax laws for six years is poised to win a bonanza for a multinational with billions stashed away in offshore accounts.

Bill Archer, a member of Bush's Republican Party, was chairman of the House of Representatives tax writing committee from 1995 to 2001.

He used the position to allow companies to salt away billions in tax havens.

Archer is now chief tax lobbyist for PwC accountants. He is pushing for a new law to cut tax on money banked offshore from 35 percent to 5 percent.

# inside the system

# Foul behaviour in the highest places

**AN Arab-American woman who was in court to fight a parking ticket fainted when a US judge asked her if she was a terrorist.**

Anissa Khoder has now filed a complaint about judge William Crosbie.

She says that after giving the judge her reasons for why the parking ticket should be dismissed, "He said something like, 'You have the money to support terrorists, but you don't want to pay the ticket.'

"I could not believe I was hearing that."

Crosbie has confirmed that he made the remark but said he was "probably kidding with her".

Meanwhile back in Britain

Khalid Jayyosi

giant car corporation Daimler Chrysler has been found guilty of similar racial discrimination against a Palestinian man by an employment tribunal.

Khalid Jayyosi was an Infor-

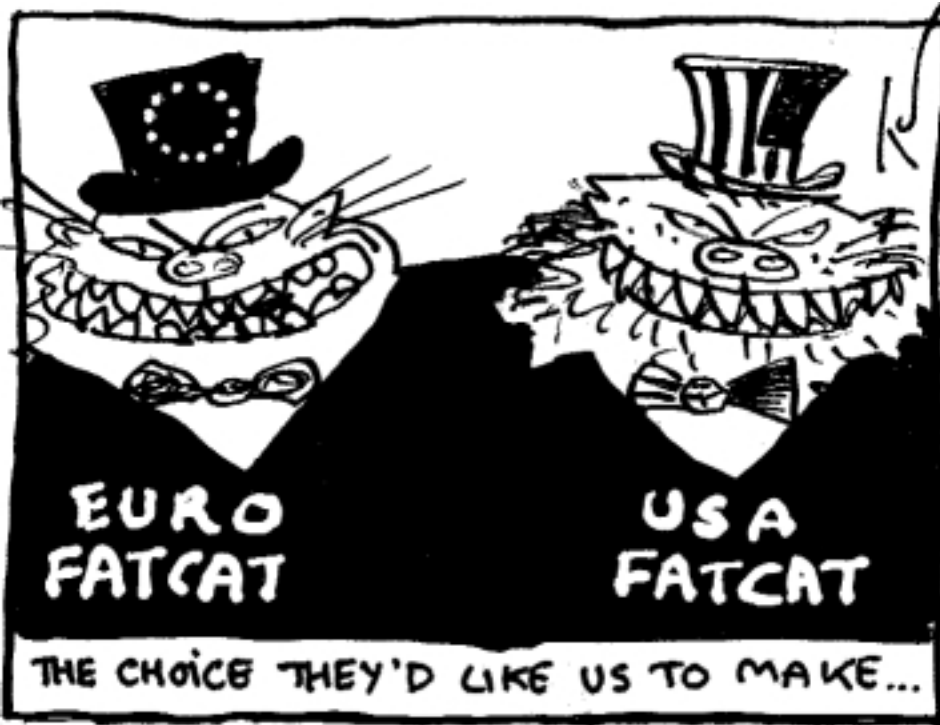
mation Technology manager at the company's Milton Keynes HQ. His colleagues changed his computer password to "suicide bomber".

He also said that he was compared to the 11 September hijackers, and asked if he was a bomb maker. On another occasion he was told to "go back to Sangatte".

The company's personnel manager sent an e-mail asking colleagues, "How critical an employee is Khalid?" He was later made redundant.

Mr Jayyosi said, "I had to put up with all kinds of rubbish. I could not eat, I could not sleep. I was angry."

Damages against the company are to be set next month.



# Tea with the evil duo

LABOUR MP Ann Clwyd is keeping some very strange company.

She has been a well-known champion of the rights of Kurdish people in the Middle East.

Tony Blair sacked her from the opposition front bench in 1995 when she missed a vote in parliament

to be on the Iraqi border monitoring the Turkish army's incursion into the Kurdish

"safe haven".

Unfortunately over recent months she fell hook, line and sinker for the government's spin that the war on Iraq was about liberating the Kurds. She even threw her weight behind Blair in the parliamentary vote on the war.

As a reward, Blair was due to send her this week to Iraq as his "humanitarian ambassador"—a purely ornamental title.

Before heading off Clwyd had time to fly over to Washington to meet two of the most hawkish members of the Bush administration—defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz.

The evil duo invited her over after Wolfowitz read her column in the *Times* newspaper calling for backing the war.

By their friends...

# Turning a blind eye

FORMER *MIRROR* editor Roy Greenslade launched a welcome broadside against inaccurate and bigoted reporting of asylum seekers on Monday.

His *Guardian* column singled out the *Daily Express*,

*Sun*, *Telegraph* and *Mail*.

Sadly there was no comment on the *Guardian's* sister paper, the *Observer*.

The day before it had run the front page headline "Immigrants 'Behind Crime Wave'—Police".

# Ken's nasty fat cat

LONDON MAYOR Ken Livingstone has appointed David Campbell to head the London Tourist Board at the salary of £300,000 a year.

Campbell, a former Pepsi, Virgin and Ministry of Sound executive quickly attacked Livingstone for his

denunciation of George Bush.

Livingstone rightly called Bush "everything that is repellent in politics".

Campbell said the mayor should not say such things, "repetition would not be helpful". So why is Ken appointing people like this?



## WHO SAYS?

"The paper won't be as relentlessly serious on the front page as it has been. We're going to rein the seriousness back by 20 or 30 percent."

PIERS MORGAN editor of the *Daily Mirror* on the paper's future

"I think the UK is suffering from what we may call a post Iraqi backlash... There is a bit of political voting that goes on."

TERRY WOGAN on the Eurovision song contest—the UK entry got nil points

"My film is about an Afghan woman who has no power but who wants to be a president one day. I don't want to be a president myself if the best-known president in the world is George Bush."

SAMIRA MAKHMALBAF Iranian director after winning an award for the film *Five in the Afternoon* at the Cannes film festival, in France

"The Labour Party is a corporation like Adidas or any other brand. The idea that you vote for them and that they are any different to Adidas, Nike or McDonald's is absurd. They are McLabour."

HANIF KUREISHI novelist and film writer at the Cannes film festival in France

"We are responding to the G8 as if it were a major natural disaster that we cannot manage."

CHANTAL TAUXE journalist who wrote on panic in Geneva



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# news of the world

## FRANCE

# High stakes as fight over pensions grows

**THE STAKES are mounting in the battle over workers' pension rights in France.**

Sunday saw a new round of massive demonstrations against the Tory government's plan to force workers to work more years, and pay more, for poorer pensions.

Around 600,000 people marched in Paris, with tens of thousands more marching in cities across the country.

Major strikes also continued on Monday and Tuesday, as the government prepared to present its plan to a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

Key Tories have made clear that the whole future of their assault on workers and welfare now hangs in the balance.

"We must not retreat from these plans," declared Alain Juppe, president of the governing UMP coalition. "The time for decision has come."

Juppe was the Tory prime minister who headed the 1995 major assault on welfare, and whose government was effectively broken by mass public sector strikes and demonstrations.

The spectre of that defeat has haunted France's rulers ever since. Now they are both determined to carry through their new attack, and fearful of the consequences if they are beaten.

Francois Bayrou, another key Tory leader, warned on French TV on Sunday, "What is at stake is not just the question of pensions but the whole issue of whether France is reformable or not."

**That "reform" is familiar to us in Britain—cuts, privatisation, attacks on welfare. There is no doubting the potential of workers in France to win against these attacks.**

Sunday's march in Paris was vast, with three separate routes across the capital.

Trains and buses had brought people from across France, many travelling through the night. In some areas workers occupied rail stations to force the national rail company to lay on special trains.

Others who were unable to get to the capital joined

**'We don't want to go straight from a factory to a cemetery'**

local marches.

Many teachers joined the marches. They are fighting a parallel assault by the government. This attack, under the cover of "decentralisation", opens the way for job cuts, privatisation and a two-tier education system.

## Areas

Tens of thousands of teachers have been on "indefinite" strike in parts of France for weeks—disrupting exams in some areas.

Yves Gelin, a teacher, told journalists, "Behind the reform of pensions and the decentralisation plan in education lies the same neo-liberal logic."

A parent, Manuella Rebaelo, who marched with striking teachers, said, "They are on strike at my children's school. But it is not the strikers who are putting our children's future at risk. It is the government."

School student Remin Thomachot said, "It not easy to revise for exams in these conditions. But it's a fight for our future and we have to organise and protest."

Council workers, rail workers, postal workers, civil servants, telecom workers and other public sector workers marched, and many were on strike on Monday or Tuesday of this week.

Health workers and some

Millions have taken to the streets in this crucial battle

civil servants were also out on Monday. On Tuesday it was the turn of telecom, post, airline and air traffic control workers—and another national strike of teachers.

In some areas workers were going further.

In the important Bouches du Rhone region around the city of Marseille a joint regional body uniting all the key unions called for Tues-

day to be a day of action with strikes across the board.

Significantly that appeal was backed by the CFDT union federation in the region, despite the union's national leaders attempting to agree a rotten deal with the government.

Private sector workers joined Sunday's march too. Car workers from Toyota and Citroen marched together.

Jerome, from Toyota, told journalists, "Our job is very physical. We should be able to retire at 55—otherwise we will go straight from the factory to the cemetery and have our retirement there."

Omar from Toyota added that Sunday's protest should be "a launching pad for a general strike until the government retreats".

Paul McGarr

Picture: Sion Touhig

## INDIA

# 50 million strike at privatisation

UP TO 50 million Indian public sector workers joined a powerful one-day strike in protest against government privatisation plans on Wednesday of last week.

Workers in banking, insurance, the post office, transport and mining joined the action ensuring major disruption nationwide.

For the second time this month, a strike has hit the financial sector particularly hard.

In Calcutta morning rush hour streets were deserted and the stock exchange was forced to close. Around the country train services were hit as workers blockaded railway lines.

Anger at privatisation is centred on the threat of massive job losses, attacks on workers' rights and

changes to pension schemes that will see employers making a reduced contribution to the pension fund.

India's right wing BJP government's plans to raise money by selling off state owned banks and companies over the next year in order to reduce its budget deficit.

Trade unions are threatening further action, including longer strikes, if the government does not back down.

There are signs that the unpopularity of privatisation is hitting the BJP support in elections, and is even alienating its own party workers, many of whom are boycotting work for their government ministers.

Yuri Prasad

# DEBATE IN MOVEMENT OVER WAY TO WIN

**THE CRUCIAL battle in the coming days will be within the movement.**

It is a fight between those who want to push for a general strike and those who want to hold the movement back.

Leaders of the key CGT and FO union federations have been making threats about more sustained strikes, but also holding back workers.

They hope to do a balancing act, slowly ratcheting up pressure while limiting the action in the hope that the government will agree to serious talks.

Fighting a determined government while not using the

full power of workers risks a serious defeat.

There are many workers and union activists who understand this and want to take the kind of action which can guarantee victory.

The role played by those in the main parties workers look to, will be crucial in determining which strategy wins out.

Leaders of the main opposition party, the Socialists, equivalent to Britain's Labour Party, joined Sunday's march.

They are more interested in riding the movement to rebuild their electoral fortunes than in taking on a government plan

whose outlines they half agree with.

And the Socialist Party leaders fear a general strike almost as much as the Tories do.

The powerful Communist Party, influential in the CGT union federation, is a big force.

It too hopes to rebuild its base. It lost members and votes after its dismal record in a government alongside the Socialists that ended in electoral disaster last year.

The Communist Party paper *L'Humanité* on Monday declared the movement had Tory prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin with his "back against the wall".

But then it dismissed the idea

that the country was about to "topple into a general strike", and meekly warned that the indefinite strikes planned by some workers would mean difficult times for the government.

France's important revolutionary socialist parties are pushing for more determined action. They are the LCR and LO, which between them won 2.8 million votes in last year's presidential elections.

In the coming days they will need to hurl themselves into that fight. The only way to guarantee victory is if workers meet the government's fire with fire.

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YOUR VIEW

Why no pensions struggles here?

YOUR COVERAGE of the mass actions over pensions organised by French, Austrian and German unions is welcome. British pensions are much worse than in those countries. So why no struggle here?

Western European unions have fought to keep privatisation out of their pension systems, whereas the TUC has done the opposite here. This means the best the TUC does in the face of the collapse of our occupation pension system is to call for more tax breaks, and urge "investor activism" but walk away from struggle over national insurance pensions.

Hugh Lowe  
West London

Cambridge spies were wrong

WATCHING the recent BBC2 series brought home to me how wrong the "Cambridge spies" were.

They imagined that as counter-espionage agents

done nothing for the working class.

This summer the Labour government is hosting a meeting of European Union members to encourage the supply of military aid to Colombia, despite the fact that Colombia has one of the worst human rights records in the world.

New Labour don't organise in Northern Ireland. I hope it stays that way.  
Sean Smyth  
Belfast

Should we get same wages?

DESCRIBING WHAT a socialist society would be, I have to ask what will be the incentive if everyone gets the same wage?

The needs and abilities of people are different. I have studied for 20 years. Is it fair that I will be paid the same wage as another worker/official who does not have the same qualification?

Who is going to do the "shit" jobs? How will the socialist society get rid of bureaucracy? What about human nature and greed?

Will a community that believes in Islam for example be allowed to have its own mosques? Who will build the mosques? The Muslim community or society as a whole?

Nidhall Eddeym  
by e-mail

Be more clear over wealth

IN "WHERE we stand" you define socialism as one where the working class has "seized control of the wealth and plans its production and distribution".

By only talking about "control" and "plans" in respect of wealth only and not the means of producing wealth, you could just be advocating state capitalism—a working class state "controlling" capitalism.

It would be far more clear and explicit if your objective was the common ownership of the means of production and distribution by the working class, production



Wealth

only taking place to meet need not profit.

In that way, you would be clear you were advocating the complete abolition of capitalist commodity production, rather than its nationalisation.

Andrew Northall  
Kettering

Picture: Tim Driven/Panos Pictures

Poverty scars Morocco's cities. Here a donkey cart loaded with wood passes a woman begging in Marrakesh

Casablanca's two cities

THE RECENT suicide bombings in asablanca in Morocco were horrific and wrong.

Attacks like this kill innocent people and do nothing at all to change the things those carrying them out are angry about.

But we have to understand that people are right to be angry at the overt and injustice in the world and offer an alternative which offers a real way to change things.

All of the people who carried out the bombings in Casablanca come from an area called Sidi Moumen.

This is a shanty town where thousands of people are forced to live in the most desperate poverty. It is one of similar shanty towns which ring the city, like the one where I grew up in Morocco.

There are no proper water facilities or electricity supply. Sometimes there have no proper sewage facilities so people have to go to the

toilet in a bucket and throw it in the street.

Unemployment is huge and growing. Across Morocco around one in three people have no job. We have doctors who are unemployed and many people who may have got a higher education who have no work. In poor areas like Sidi Moumen unemployment is even worse.

Morocco's rulers have opened to the world market in line with the policies pushed by the US and bodies like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. This has made things even worse for most people in Morocco over recent years as factories have closed.

Things are so bad that people try and escape, with people making the dangerous and desperate attempt to cross the Mediterranean in tiny boats. Last year over 1,000

Moroccans drowned trying to make this journey.

Yet just round the corner from shanty towns like Sidi Moumen there is a completely different world, where Morocco's rich live.

Here there is every luxury you can imagine, well guarded villas with swimming pools. It is like going to a completely different planet.

We have no real democracy in Morocco—the king has all the power. There are parties which stand in elections but you can hardly tell the difference between them. They are all corrupt, and nothing changes.

In this situation people can turn to religion as an answer, and some even to attacks like we saw.

We have to understand why people feel like this, and offer a real way that can change things in this world, and so bring a free and equal

society where the wealth of Morocco is used for all the people.  
Said  
London

● I HAVE just spent a few months out in India and Morocco. The tension and the strength of feeling is frightening.

When the passport inspector discovered I was a British citizen on my way into Morocco his attitude turned to hostility.

I can understand the desperation people feel. The war on Iraq has pissed a lot of people off. What can people do? Politicians aren't listening.

In India the right wing government is clamping down on different ethnic groups under the name of the so called war on terror.

It's frightening what is going on.  
Barry Donnan  
Scotland

Nothing to lose but our chains

SOCIALIST Worker readers may like to know of my first act as newly elected Socialist Alliance councillor on Preston City Council.

I voted against the installation of the new mayor at the council meeting on Thursday 15 May.

This is the first time the mayor has not been appointed with unanimous support for many years.

I refused to vote for a mayor appointed by an agreement between the Tory and Labour parties.

The new mayor is a Tory. His party were fully behind the recent war in Iraq and support the continuing occupation of that country by British and American troops.

I was elected as a socialist anti-war candidate. I would see it as a failure to represent my voters if I voted for a pro-



war mayor.

I also think the pomp and ceremony of the meeting means little to ordinary people in Preston. It is a relic of the past.

Every day people in Preston face a variety of problems like racism, poverty, inequality and unemployment. Yet the council, many dressed in funny ancient dress, acted like they were part of an old boys' club.

No wonder so many refuse to vote for these people.  
Councillor Michael Lavalette  
Preston

Our strikes on rail a success

SOCIALIST WORKER was right to praise the success of the guards' strikes over safety.

We faced enormous intimidation on some companies. But still we struck solidly.

Nine companies struck at first, then three more joined.

The action really united people. But we did face problems. Managers were training up to be used as scabs.

South West Trains, where activists were pushing for a rebalot after the first strike vote was lost, was able to hire out managers to companies like Virgin to undermine our strikes.

The train operating companies got government backing all along the line. I

have no doubt they wanted to punish the RMT because it has been so outspoken in defending its members and criticising the government.

We did move to step up the action, but many people were worried about losing money. There are important lessons here about how to sustain action.

On Virgin West Coast we were pleased our action got the companies to talk. It was a step forward when you consider how contemptuously they had treated us.

We are now waiting to see what comes out of the process. We are determined to take more action to defend our safety role if needed.

Guard  
Virgin West Coast line

obituary

Colin Clark

MANY IN York were shocked by the sudden death of Colin Clark.

Colin fought for socialism in the Labour Party and in engineering and council workplaces in the West Midlands during the 1960s and 70s.

Let down by Labour, he joined the Socialist Workers Party in York.

In his early fifties he successfully studied for a degree in History and Spanish.

Despite failing health he took part in demonstrations and Socialist Worker sales whenever he could and loved the cut and thrust of a lively Marxist forum.

Condolences to Oliver and Christine.  
Frank Ormston  
York

**DAILY  
Mirror**

**Daily Mail**

The debate over Europe has reached a frenzy recently and has split bosses and politicians in Britain. *Socialist Worker* looks at who's in the two camps and asks...

# WHAT'S BEHIND THIS ROW?

Mandelson and Sir Richard Evans, boss BAE

## PRO-EURO

**T**HE RIGHT wing tabloids and the *Daily Telegraph* have whipped up a frenzy over two issues over greater European integration. The furore is over the referendum over the European constitution, and whether Britain should adopt the euro currency.

The euro issue is threatening to shake New Labour to the core, just as it did the Tories under Margaret Thatcher and John Major.

Blair could face "all-out civil war" if he opts for an early referendum on the euro, said Denis McShane, the minister for Europe, last week. And McShane is in favour of the euro!

The row is likely to get even more heated as Gordon Brown is due to announce on 9 June whether or not Britain is ready to join the currency.

Suddenly the *Sun*, which only last month was praising New Labour over the war, is now attacking the government for being "pro-euro".

Peter Mandelson, the former minister whose "project" was about making New Labour friendly to the *Sun*, is condemning those who are "anti-euro".

The divide within the British establishment over the euro is really about how best to pursue their interests and profits, not what will benefit ordinary people. *Jane Hardy* examines how those divisions have come about.

IT IS a confusing debate. Most of the tabloid newspapers have been waving the Union Jack "to defend our pound".

Other sections of the press have turned the question into a personal battle between Brown and Blair.

The issue is apparently so complicated that the cabinet have been sent away to read 2,500 pages of a 19-volume document prepared by the Treasury.

To complicate things further Brown has talked relentlessly about the economy having to pass five tests, as though joining the euro would be the outcome of some pseudo-scientific process.

It's necessary to cut through all this mystification. Whether or not Britain joins the euro is a fierce and bitter debate among the ruling class about the way forward for British capitalism.

On 1 January 2002 12

Murdoch and Sir Richard George, boss of Weetabix

## ANTI-EURO

foreign investment.

Britain has much higher foreign investment than other European countries, and big firms from the US and Japan have threatened to pull out if Britain stays out of the euro.

In October the accountants Ernst and Young reported that, while Britain still attracted the highest proportion of foreign investment, its lead has been cut, as has the number of deals.

**Slow growth**  
In 2000 France overtook Britain as the prime location for manufacturing projects.

While many big manufacturing firms have lined up with the yes camp, bosses in the financial sector are more split. London accounts for more foreign currency dealing than any other global financial centre.

If Britain stays out of Euroland it may make it more attractive for banks to operate in France or Germany.

Despite paying lip service to Europe, Brown is leading the so called euro sceptics. The excuse they give for this "not being the right time" is that European economies are facing slow growth and high unemployment.

This would hold back the "dynamic" British economy.

The reality is that the dynamism of British capitalism is an illusion. It is extremely fragile because the linchpin of the apparent growth has been

consumer credit.

This in turn has been fuelled by the ridiculous escalation of house prices. Fifty percent of mortgages are remortgaging—that is people changing their mortgage and borrowing more to feed spending habits.

Brown wants to hang on to two important tools for giving British capitalism a quick fix. One of these tools is interest rates, and the second is the exchange rate.

Altering the exchange rate can be a quick way of reducing prices and stealing an advantage from foreign competitors.

He would have to give up both of these tools if Britain joins the euro.

The debate about the euro is part of a wider political argument about whether to line up with the US economic power bloc, or an increasingly powerful EU.

The new euro is now one of the strongest currencies, second only to the dollar.

While not lining up with the Little Englanders we must be clear that the euro is not in the interests of ordinary working people—it is part of a bosses' Europe.

The wider project of monetary integration serves the interests of those in big business. Cutting public spending has been at the centre of this, and in particular attacking pensions.

The recent strikes in France show the way forward. We want workers' unity, solidarity that is based on the interests of working people not the bosses.



## MYTH OF INVESTMENT AND JOBS

**BOTH SIDES** in the euro debate defend their position by saying their strategy would lead to more investment in Britain and jobs.

In fact most foreign

investment in Britain is about buying up existing firms, not new development.

The British rich invest more abroad than they do at home—some 39 percent of the UK's direct investment abroad is held in the US, and almost as much, 31 percent, is in Europe.

So different

businesses can be pulled different ways.

Privately, both the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Engineering Employers Federation believe the balance of business opinion is tipping away from joining the single currency.

The engineering bosses' scepticism contrasts with a

survey of its members last September that showed increasing support for joining the euro.

The CBI believes that the UK should only join the euro provided that there is "greater labour market flexibility".

The British Chamber of Commerce argues a "wait and see" policy.

Yet the Federation of Small Businesses is firmly against, saying, "Britain should not adopt the euro now, or for the foreseeable future."

Neither side wants to "lose out". By this they mean the chance to increase their profits and ram through privatisation, and making workers pay for it.

"Against a Europe of capital and war"—Barcelona 2002



what socialists say

Why do we need a socialist newspaper?

“THE MOVEMENT is so fresh. Why do you look back to old ideas? Why do you produce a paper and spend time selling it?”

Those questions came up at a recent Marxist forum.

The answers in the discussion arose out of the experiences people have had within the anti-capitalist and anti-war movements.

The last three years have seen the growth of a tremendous global movement. Nothing showed it more clearly than 15 February this year.

Two million people marched in London—the biggest demonstration in British history.

It is easy to forget that it took place just three months ago. The government and the establishment have not forgotten. They felt their blood run cold at the sight.

It confirmed the old socialist idea that the mass of working class people can and do suddenly erupt into conflict with the system.

Of course, millions of people are not in permanent revolt.

They usually feel ground down and isolated. Capitalism functions in a variety of ways to keep people feeling like that.

But we have seen a glimpse of how rapidly large numbers of individuals sharing a common hatred of at least an aspect of the system can come together and discover their power.

We have seen something else as well—the lengths which our rulers will go to in order to throw back that movement.

The established political parties and the media combined to corral it. It was not just the barrage of pro-war propaganda.

It was also the more subtle claim that the real argument over the war was taking place in parliamentary politics, between Tony Blair (backed by Iain Duncan Smith) and Charles Kennedy.

When the war started Kennedy (and most Labour backbenchers) went along with it, whatever their previous reservations. So did the *Daily Mirror*.

That shows why we need an alternative to the official media. There are other

**KEVIN OVENDEEN**  
on the importance of ideas

reasons to do with the growth of the movement itself.

Throughout history huge movements have developed drawing in new layers of people who never previously regarded themselves as political.

That is what has given the anti-war and anti-capitalist movements great strength.

Attempts to write off the anti-war demonstrations or anti-capitalist events such as Genoa two years ago as the work of a few militant activists founded.

There developed among everyone involved in the movement a deep sense of unity, no matter what their wider political viewpoint. Large numbers of people drew the connections between war and other issues.

The movement constantly throws up political questions.

**Sharp debate**

The attempt by the Italian state to smash the anti-capitalist movement off the streets at Genoa provoked a sharp debate.

Some argued the murder of protester Carlo Giuliani meant it was no longer possible or right to try to mobilise mass protests again.

Others, who became the majority, argued that the way to face down the repression was by drawing even larger numbers of people into the mass protests.

They had to argue against both those who wanted to put polite pressure on the powers that be and those who wanted a minority of activists to confront the state on behalf of everyone else.

The anti-war movement has been marked by debate since its inception.

What became the majority view was that the movement should encompass all those who opposed the war.

The aim was to encourage a myriad of local initiatives and, crucially, draw people together in mass mobilisations to focus our force on the government.

There was a spontaneous mass feeling against the war.

That only turned into mass protests because people organised together for them to happen.

Organisation within the movement is not only necessary over tactical questions about how best it can go forward.

Even people opposing the system over one issue, for example the war on Iraq, can accept some of the lies pumped out over other issues.

Just because someone opposes the war on Iraq does not mean they automatically see through the right wing lies about asylum seekers.

Involvement in the movement means they are more likely to. But that depends on people winning those arguments.

That is why *Socialist Worker* does not simply provide facts about the war and occupation of Iraq that are buried in the mainstream media.

It seeks to connect the whole range of issues. It looks to the best experiences of activists to try to offer a way forward for the movement as a whole. It also draws on the history of previous struggles.

There has been a debate in the working class movement about persuasion versus mass forceful mobilisation, and reform as opposed to revolution, since the Chartist movement of the 1840s.

The great issues that come up today are new takes on questions thrown up in every social movement in history. We should not be afraid of looking back at them for inspiration and pointers for today. It would be the height of arrogance not to.

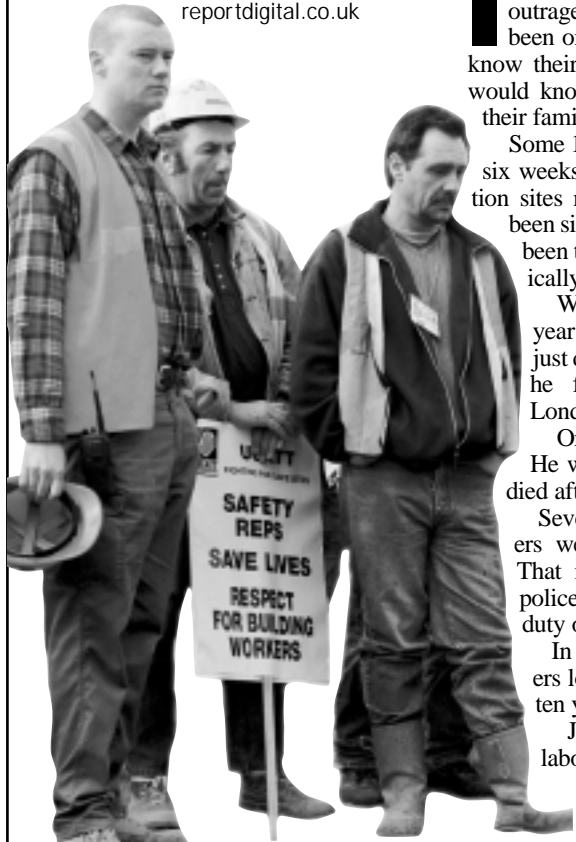
*Socialist Worker* is sold through networks of people. That helps pull those networks together into an organised force that can mobilise wider numbers over every battle the system throws up.

 <p>31 March MICHAEL DAVIS Died days before retiring when he fell from a roof in Morden, south London.</p>	 <p>8 April DANIEL DENNIS Fell through a roof light in North Wales.</p>	 <p>10 April JOHN DORAN Died after a trench collapsed while working for MJ O'Connor Ltd in Gwent.</p>	 <p>11 April DANNY LEIGHTON Died following a scaffold tower collapse at Cossington, Leicestershire.</p>	 <p>16 April BRIAN GIBSON Run over while working for MJ Gleeson at Leeds University.</p>	 <p>17 April ANDREW THOMAS Killed while delivering plasterboard to a site in Caldercott, South Wales.</p>	 <p>26 April RONALD WILSON Killed when a crane fell on him near the A50 in Staffordshire.</p>
 <p>29 April SLAWMIR KOCON Killed when he was hit by a chimney flue in Northwood, near Hillingdon.</p>	 <p>29 April GEORGE ROGERS Killed when thrown from a dumper truck in Salisbury.</p>	 <p>29 April JACK TOWEY Run over by a skip lorry at a construction works on the A13, Barking, Essex.</p>	 <p>1 May PAUL ROSS Died after a fall at the Channel Tunnel Rail Link in Grays, Essex.</p>	 <p>2 May SHANE NEIL Crushed to death by a forklift truck while working for Wellwood Roofing Services at the Building Research Establishment, Bedford.</p>	 <p>5 May KEITH JONES Died after a fall on a site in Leominster, Herefordshire.</p>	 <p>11 May MARK WALKER Electrocuted while working for Daubney Services Ltd at Millburn Gate House, Durham.</p>

FOURTEEN DEAD.  
NOTHING SAID

*Fourteen construction workers were killed in the course of duty during April and May. Yet there was no outcry in the national press. Helen Shooter investigates*

Construction workers protest about deaths on building sites outside Safety Summit Picture: Jess Hurd reportdigital.co.uk



**I**F 14 police officers had been killed during their course of duty the national press would have created an outrage. Their pictures would have been on every front page. We would know their faces, names, and ages. We would know the grief and heartache of their families and colleagues.

Some 14 building workers died in the six weeks from 31 March on construction sites round Britain. But there has been silence in the press. We have not been told their names or how horrifically they died.

Where were the pictures of 65 year old Michael Davis? He died just days before his retirement after he fell from a roof in south London.

Or what about Daniel Dennis? He was just 17 years old when he died after a fall in North Wales.

Seventy nine construction workers were killed at work last year. That is more than the number of police officers killed in the line of duty over the past 30 years.

In 2001, 106 construction workers lost their lives—the highest for ten years.

John Doran, a 54 year old labourer, died last month after being buried under six feet of mud and earth on a site in

Weston-super-Mare. The father of three left Ireland over 30 years ago in search of a job and the hope of a decent life in Britain, like many thousands of Irish immigrants.

He found work as a labourer. Building workers are forced to grab any chance to work, in an insecure industry. They often suffer long hours, in rotten conditions, employed by a subcontractor. Behind it all is a giant corporation profiting from a multimillion pound contract.

Many companies try to get away with the bare minimum of safety and training.

Yet it is virtually impossible to convict a company of manslaughter after employees are killed at work.

Under pressure from unions and backbenchers New Labour announced last week that it plans to introduce a tough new “corporate killing” offence.

They said this six years ago in their manifesto. Bosses have been kicking and screaming against this ever since, and are pressuring New Labour to water down the legislation.

But the bosses have little to fear from the new legislation. Even if they are found guilty of corporate killing, judges will not have the power to imprison or even disqualify an individual boss.

George Stewart knows all about the high cost of lack of safety on sites.

His son Paul died along with three

other workers when they fell from a gantry on the M5 Avonmouth Bridge near Bristol in September 1999.

Paul, and two others, were employed by Kvaerner Cleveland Bridge UK Ltd, part of the giant Kvaerner multinational.

“Profits come before lives,” George Stewart told *Socialist Worker*.

“The cavalier attitude cost four men their lives. They didn’t even know they were in danger.

“None of the four were trained to work on a gantry. I’ve worked in the industry for 45 years and when I read what happened on that site, it was horrendous.

“It wasn’t the first incident. There had been a series leading up to it, including a partial collapse of the gantry.

“It was Paul’s first job. He had just finished his apprenticeship, training as a welder.

“The day of his death I was in Somerset on a job. My wife rang to say she had seen on the news a gantry had fallen and Paul had not rung to say he was OK.

“So I rang up and they said Paul had been killed. It was a month before his son Jamie’s first birthday.

“It’s ruined us—the accident and the stress of fighting for three and a half years to try to get justice.

“We had already buried our other son at 18 after a car accident. My wife is not the same woman. She is angry at the whole world.

“It’s been a long hard fight to get an

inquest which is set for July. I’m hoping for an unlawful killing verdict.

“The fine the companies got is a pittance after pleading guilty to breaching health and safety regulation. They got £150 million for the contract and then a £1 million fine between them. That’s not a punishment at all.

“Even the compensation that was awarded isn’t much when you divide £1.3 million between four families.

“The government has promised since 1997 that it would come up with corporate manslaughter legislation.

“Even now they won’t give us a date when it will become law.

“It’s just a promise of a promise of a promise. Nothing’s getting done.”

Tragedies when no inspector calls

**‘OVER HALF** of fatalities on construction sites are falls from a height. Preventative measures are straightforward and known to the industry.

Out of the other 50 percent of deaths, half of them are caused by accidents with vehicles when someone is run over.

So there are two main

killers. The problem is the lines of responsibility on a site are totally confused.

You have a main contractor in overall charge who subcontracts out. Then these will subcontract out further. Then other labour can be supplied by an agency.

The main pressures are on time and money. If a

company has cut to the bone in terms of money and is rushing to complete by a deadline, that pressure can lead to corners being cut.

The culture is not “Is it safe?” It’s “Have we done the bare minimum?”

There are around 130 inspectors for construction sites in Britain. They have

to do site inspections and investigate accidents.

So few inspectors means only about 6 percent of all accidents reported are investigated. This means there is less time to do the preventative work that could help stop the accidents in the first place.”

Health and Safety Executive inspector

AIDS campaign

A struggle to put life before profits

**Zackie Achmat** is one of the leading figures of the South African movement fighting to get lifesaving drugs made available to everyone living with HIV and AIDS.

He was an anti-apartheid activist from an early age. Although he is HIV positive, he is refusing to take antiretroviral drugs until they are made available for everyone in the South African public health system.

He is chair of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

This was the group which spearheaded the campaign against the giant pharmaceutical companies which had tried to stop South Africa importing cheap anti-AIDS drugs.

Since the victory over that issue, the South African government has dragged its feet over making the drugs available. This is now the focus for TAC’s efforts.

Zackie spoke in London at a meeting organised by Globalise Resistance last week:

“THE SOUTH African government’s failure to act means that 600 people die a day. AIDS is worse for poor people and black people and especially poor black people.

They can’t afford the drugs, they live in third rate housing, they are excluded from education and they are forced to use the grossly inadequate public healthcare service.

The latest figures show that the private health insurance sector spent 388 billion rand on the health of 7 million people. The public health system spent 272 billion rand for the health needs of 30 million people.

The government’s spending priorities reinforce the structural basis of racism.

In many ways this government is the best we have ever had and is the result of the triumph of the liberation movement.

This is one of the most exciting periods to live in South Africa. The balance of social forces has shifted in our favour and we need to push forward the pro-poor, pro-feminist, pro working class agenda.

We face an enormous task. A report drawn up for the South African government said that AIDS accounts for a quarter of all those admitted to hospital.

By 2010 AIDS will lead to three to four million dead in South Africa. This year 300,000 will die.

TAC is a small



Zackie Achmat

organisation of about 7,000 people. You can see the impact of AIDS among ourselves. Since the middle of March we have lost ten leading activists to AIDS.

We have been forced to confront the government. The ANC has not repeated with AIDS the success it has had with TB.

When the ANC came to power there was no decent TB programme and the cure rate was less than 40 percent.

In northern KwaZulu-Natal the average journey to get treatment for TB was 28 kilometres. Within a year the average journey was 12 kilometres and within 18 months it was 800 metres.

But the government decided it would operate within the fiscal constraints of the IMF and the World Bank, even though they do not owe a penny to either.

This meant that they cut services. AIDS treatment was a victim.

Instead of a real treatment and prevention strategy Thabo Mbeki, Mandela’s successor, promoted a “drug” called Virodene as treatment for people living with HIV. It was a toxic industrial solvent.

We have increased the pressure on the government. It promised action by February.

When it did not happen we started civil disobedience. On 20 March we occupied three police stations and demanded the arrest of the health minister and the trade and industry minister for culpable homicide.

Their policies mean death for hundreds of thousands of people. They won’t distribute drugs, even though they say the money is

available to fund them.

Should the government continue to refuse to implement a treatment and prevention plan we are going to start an extensive international campaign.

Perhaps some people are worried about campaigning against the ANC government. I am a member of the ANC who thinks Mandela is a saint.

But we cannot put our party loyalty before people’s right to life. We have a wider duty to social justice and to the people who are dying.

We want a huge campaign.”

Jonathan Neale from Globalise Resistance set out the background to TAC’s struggle:

“THE scientific and pharmaceutical world has developed drugs that extended the life of people with AIDS by five years, eight years or ten years or more.

For about two thirds of people they work well.

These drugs were mostly developed by publicly funded research. Then the patents were sold to private companies.

A year’s treatment can be made in India for around \$300 a year. In the US that same treatment sells for \$12,000 a year.

Until the 1990s it was agreed that copies (“generics”) of antibiotics and anti-malarial drugs should be sold to the Third World.

That agreement was broken by the World Trade Organisation in the 1990s. The TRIPS agreement says that governments must agree to bring in laws to enforce patents and copyrights.

Even before TRIPS has been enforced, the US government has intervened to halt the import of generic drugs.

The achievement of TAC was to mobilise a large movement to force the multinationals to back off from a court case that would have blocked the importation of generics.

Companies now say they will make cheap drugs available to Africa. They make cheap drugs available to countries so long as generics are not allowed in.

This is because much more is at stake than Africa. Some 41 percent of pharmaceutical sales by value are in the US and 61 percent of the profits come from the US.

The companies want to defend patents to protect those markets.”

**‘By 2010 AIDS will lead to three to four million dead in South Africa’**

**Socialist Review**  
monthly magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

**E2** from *Socialist Worker* sellers, or Phone 020 7538 3308 E-mail sr@swp.org.uk Write SR, PO Box 82, London E3 3LH

**YOUNG GIFTED AND BACK**

Rob Hoveman writes on the opportunities for the left

**Martin Smith** on the state of the trade union movement

**Iraqi activists** speak out against the occupation

**Plus** Lindsey German celebrates the re-release of *The Leopard*



Michael Albert of Znet is the first contributor to *Socialist Worker's* new series, *Life After Capitalism*. He is one of the best known figures in the anti-capitalist movement and author of *Parecon: Life After Capitalism*.

What are your main criticisms of capitalism?

Capitalism is greedy aggrandisement alongside harsh denial.

It is untrammelled accumulation accompanying ecological dissolution. It is alienated production and consumption that denies dignity and integrity.

It is competitive anti-sociality that violates human solidarity and hope.

Capitalism incorporates private ownership of productive property, remuneration for bargaining power and profit-seeking, hierarchical corporate divisions of labour, and markets for allocation.

These institutions produce anti-sociality not solidarity, gluttony and poverty not equity, alienation and homogenisation not diversity, and authoritarian corporate hierarchy not self management.

What are the key ideas of Parecon?

Participatory economics (Parecon) emphasises that an economy's defining institutions should facilitate production, consumption, and allocation to meet needs and develop potentials.

An economy should not waste resources, energies, talents or other attributes we hold dear. An economy should enlarge solidarity, equity, diversity, and self management.

Parecon advocates workers' and consumers' councils with self managing decision-making methods, remuneration for effort and sacrifice, balanced job complexes and participatory planning.

Put differently, Parecon eliminates the division of the population into opposed classes—Parecon doesn't have some who rule and others who obey, some who prosper and others who perish.

And Parecon urges that to eliminate class division we need to re-define economic arrangements not only to remove ownership of productive property and accrual of profits by a tiny capitalist class, but also to eliminate monopolisation of empowering work and access to levers of decision making power by a larger but still minority "coordinator class".

How do you answer the accusation that Parecon is utopian?

What is utopian is to ask for the impossible. It is utopian to stare at a tree and ask it to fly, or ask it to grace us with love and affection.

It is utopian, in the same sense but more relevantly, to ask people to be owners of capital and yet simultaneously reject profit seeking. Or to ask markets to deliver solidarity, or to ask central planning or corporate centres of power to deliver self management.

To ask dictatorship to be democratic is utopian. To employ markets and corporate divisions of labour as a means to attaining equity and justice is utopian.

But there is nothing utopian about seeking ways to relate to trees that better suit my values—as compared to asking a tree to fly or to love us.

And, similarly, it is not utopian to try to organise production, consumption and allocation in better accord with our values.

The claim that there is no alternative to existing oppressions has through all history been a bulwark of reaction.

There was no alternative, at one time, in the rhetoric of slave owners regarding slavery, to the rhetoric of kings and princes regarding royal rule, to the rhetoric of (many) men regarding women having no vote or jobs, to the rhetoric of (many) whites regarding apartheid subordination of blacks in South Africa and Jim Crow racism in the US.

To say there was no alternative to these evil relations was mere rationalisation, of

# LIFE AFTER CAPITALISM

## How we could all take part in running a better world



Michael Albert (left) argues for a vision of a new society. Young protesters in Manchester (above) want a world without racism

in the present by applying our energies effectively.

Such organisations are able to prepare for the future by learning about and developing new structures in accord with our ultimate aims.

Our organisations need to melt into the society we desire, not establish lasting impediments to that society.

One instructive thing that participatory economics tells us is that there are not only two classes to strategically think about, but there are three—capitalists, workers and what I call the coordinator class.

And likewise, there are not only two systems—capitalism and something better, called socialism—to think about.

Rather, there is capitalism, there are some systems that combine markets or central planning with corporate organisation and public or state ownership which are popularly called socialism but which I label coordinatorism because in them what I call the coordinator class rules.

And then there is a system that is classless, in which people control their own labours and consumption with appropriate influence, without class division and class rule.

I call this participatory economics.

What follows from this is that it is not enough to just be anti-capitalist, but that we must also understand what is unworthy about what has gone under the label socialism—its markets or central planning, its corporate division of labour, its remuneration for power and/or output, its class rule by those who monopolise empowering work.

We should gear our organising efforts to avoid these pitfalls and attain structures we truly prefer.

I think this insight has powerful implications for the kinds of economic gains we should seek to win in the present and how we should organise around them—such as higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions, different investment patterns and, especially, redistributions of economic power.

It also has important implications for how we organise ourselves so as to produce the infrastructure of a new economy and society.

Our efforts should not incorporate class divisions, classist attitudes about remuneration and decision making, and classist (or otherwise authoritarian) structures for our own decision making.

But our efforts should instead embody the logic of the future that we seek.

For an advocate of participatory economics, this means, among other things, trying to attain balanced job complexes and self managing decision-making methods and structures in our current efforts.

We need to win non-reformist reforms, to create organisations that embody and lead towards our aims—particularly worker and consumer councils (as in Argentina, now, for example).

We need to practise and spread the ideas of balanced job complexes and self management, in a pattern of improvements in society and enlargements and refinements in our own institutions, until we can literally replace existing economic structures with new preferred ones.

And I should conclude by noting that for me economics, which is what we are discussing, is important but is not alone important.

I think we need vision not only

regarding the economy, but also regarding kinship (families, nurturance, sexuality, socialisation, etc), culture (race, ethnicity, spirituality, etc), and the polity (legislation, adjudication, implementation, etc).

And I think fighting for new defining institutions in these realms as well as in the economy is essential for generating and sustaining hope, for having a positive orientation, for being strategically oriented not only regarding what we reject, but also what we seek, and for being able to organise ourselves and build infrastructure that leads where we wish to wind up rather than leading (against our desires) to some newly oppressive condition we would never want to endure.

### More from Michael Albert

Michael Albert's book *Parecon: Life After Capitalism* is available from Bookmarks for £16. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [www.bookmarks.uk.com](http://www.bookmarks.uk.com)

Znet is an indispensable resource for what happening in the anti-capitalist movement.

It is a free website that gathers writings, speeches and interviews with leading figures in the anti-capitalist and anti-war movements. They include Noam Chomsky, Robert Fisk, Arundhati Roy and many others. The site is regularly updated. Go to [www.zmag.org/weluser.htm](http://www.zmag.org/weluser.htm)

## in my view

# It's not exactly rocket science

THE FIRST voice I heard as I left the cinema was saying, "Well I thought that was total bollocks, I really did."

No one seemed to disagree, certainly not me. The original *Matrix* was a successful film because it was clever, because it used its effects budget well, and because it had what Hollywood calls "crossover appeal".

The core audience was the usual sci-fi slackers described by Kevin Smith as "16 to 24 year old males with hygiene issues who have difficulty getting girlfriends".

*The Matrix* offered this fanbase their own special pleasures—a storyline where a lonely hacker turns out to be "The One" (wish fulfilment or what?) and a dominatrix in a PVC jumpsuit who kicks ass and falls for Neo the Nerd. And cool sunglasses.

But *The Matrix* also had a subtler appeal. The narrative was taut and logical. There was the tender love story that held it all together.

Finally, the movie played out some serious philosophical issues. The Wachowski brothers were college philosophy jocks and they marinated their movie with the kind of Eric Cantona-esque philosophy that gives the arthouse crowd hours of supercilious fun.

So why has *The Matrix Reloaded* turned into *The Bollox Over-Bloated*? After all, making sci-fi sequels is not exactly rocket science, is it? I think the answer is that the producers have got seriously greedy.

First they decided to save money by making not one but two sequels simultaneously, with *The Matrix Revolution* released in November.

The result of this is that *Reloaded* feels like a middle section rather than a film in itself. After 134 boring minutes the film doesn't actually end, it just stops.

### Strictly a Gameboy thing

The producers have also decided that the serious money is not really in movies but in the computer games market. So *Reloaded* has been simultaneously launched as an interactive game, with the unique selling point that it fits with key points in the movie.

A neat idea for the money men, but for cinema punters it has catastrophic results.

It means the fights and car crashes become the money shots around which the narrative (such as it is) is built.

So the fights and crashes happen for no reason at boringly regular intervals, and they just go on and on forever—like in a computer game.

Moreover, given that the games market is dominated by the hygienically-challenged male crowd, the sensibility of the movie has been shifted. *The Matrix Reloaded* is a strictly Gameboy thing.

So the rebel city of Zion is seemingly populated only by people who are young and fit. When they hold a "council" in a groovy cave it soon morphs into an *Ibiza Reloaded* rave, as everyone gets jiggly to the drum & bass (without the bass).

The Neo-Trinity love story even turns on their problems in finding somewhere to have sex. It all becomes far too close to *Kevin and Perry in Space* for comfort.

There is still plenty of the Poundland philosophising, but this time it isn't thrown up by the conundrums of plot (what is real and what is the desert of the real?). Instead, the philosophical bits are tacked on in set speeches—much like in student essays, really.

Spot the irony here? A lust for money has crazed the men in suits and they have let the demands of computers take control.

The rule of the machines has extirpated the very human qualities that make it all worthwhile—wit, imagination, warmth and intelligence. Now, where have I seen that story before?

Me, I'm with Morpheus—I say choose the red pill and resist. Protect your humanity and keep away from this silly film. Anyway, anyone who has half a mind to see this film is already way too intelligent to enjoy it.

The sunglasses are still great, though.

Bob Light

## REVIEWS

*Book Does one of the first books published about the war against Iraq tell the true story?*

# THE STORY OF AN UNJUST WAR

THE *GUARDIAN* has called its new book on the war against Iraq *The War We Could Not Stop*.

The title reflects the desire of millions of people to stop the war and their anger when the mightiest military power in the world unleashed its devastation on a poor and oppressed people.

The book is a blow by blow account, drawing on articles and eyewitness reports mainly from the *Guardian*, of the three weeks of the US/British war.

It brings together many of the *Guardian's* best eyewitness accounts of the carnage inflicted by the US and Britain, such as the powerful descriptions by Suzanne Goldenburg.

It reminds you not only of the horror, but also of the depth of the crisis that the book says could have toppled Blair and his government.

It confirms what the anti-war movement argued from the start: that this war wreaked havoc and suffering on the people of Iraq.

The book includes a chapter detailing the rise of the ultra right wingers like Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Richard Perle who were grouped around the Project for the New American Century.

As the book puts it, "This is the story of how a small group of politicians, policy makers and intellectuals, who came to be known as the neo-conservatives or 'neo-cons' came to get their way.

"It is the story of how they evolved a theory of America's place in the world that had as its first great objective the ousting of Saddam by American military might."

This account ends at the point that Bush and Blair declared a "victory", with the warning



School students in Glasgow protesting against the war—the protests involved wide layers of school students

that "American actions may also breed hate and contempt for Pax Americana, for that is the epoch we are about to enter".

Many in the anti-war movement will seize on a book that attempts to tell the story of the war from a critical perspective. But the book can in places be as frustrating as it was to read the *Guardian* during the war.

It tries to be "even handed" and to "tell the story from as many perspectives as possible".

It argues, "Central to the book is the idea that the war of Iraqi liberation was a vehicle for advancing American interests." Then it adds, "Some of these are undeniably noble." Well, no. All the evidence in the book tells us otherwise.

There is one thing that made me angry reading the book—the failure to understand the anti-war movement.

One chapter begins

with a dismissive account of the huge demonstration which took place the Saturday after the war began.

It argues that "the large coalition of a million that had taken to the streets before the war had melted away".

The book acknowledges the power of the global anti-war movement, and in particular the spectacular demonstrations on 15 February.

But it seriously underestimates the movement by arguing that the massive London demonstration was "broader than it was deep".

It argues that there was only one group still prepared to take to the streets: "The children of the suburban middle classes".

The anti-war movement did not melt away. The book has to admit the first demonstration when the war began was "the largest wartime demonstration in Britain".

The school students who protested cannot be dismissed as the children of the middle class.

They involved working class students, male and female, white, black and Asian. The walkouts and

lunchtime protests by significant groups of workers are not mentioned.

The large meetings, teach-ins and local protests which took place during the war and since are testament to the depth of the movement.

As the book admits, that movement was more than just against the war but also against the Blair government too.

There is a lot worth reading in this book. But the full "real story of the battle for Iraq" and the opposition to it has yet to be written.

**Hazel Croft**

*The War We Could Not Stop: The Real Story of the Battle for Iraq*, edited by Randeep Ramesh (£7.99).

## TV

### Five to catch this week

- 1 Boys Don't Cry  
Saturday, 9.05pm, BBC2  
A moving film about a young woman who poses as a man to cope with prejudice.
- 2 Afghanistan: Here's One We Invaded Earlier  
Saturday, 8.05pm, C4  
This documentary examines the aftermath of Bush's war in Afghanistan and what "liberation" meant there.
- 3 State of Play  
Sunday, 9pm, BBC1  
This excellent thriller is halfway through, but worth catching up on if you can.
- 4 Mississippi Burning  
Sunday, 12.30am, ITV1  
Film about the real life murder of three civil rights workers in the US Deep South in 1964.
- 5 Al Jazeera: Exclusive!  
Sunday, 9pm, BBC2  
A behind the scenes report into the Arab TV news station.

Compiled by Helen Shooter

The war was about US power

## THEATRE

# A play with the spirit of today

"HE SPOKE like Henry V."

That is how some right wing papers described the speech to British troops by the British army officer Lt Col Tim Collins, who is now under investigation.

The reference was to Shakespeare's play *Henry V*. It was a product of the political tensions of a time in which the monarchy struggled to adapt itself to the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

The 1944 film version of the play, with Laurence Olivier, was a shamelessly patriotic wartime epic. Any scenes that

undermined its propaganda value were ruthlessly cut.

It is that patriotic version that used to be drummed into students at school. And it is the way that New Labour would like the play to be taught now.

In stark contrast Nicholas Hytner's stunning new production gives a completely different interpretation.

Showing at the National Theatre in London, it is full of the spirit of the anti-war movement.

Performed with contemporary dress, a young leader leads his country into a war of dubious

legality to divert attention from problems at home.

Dissident cabinet ministers are executed, political prisoners are shot and Henry struggles to win over the rank and file.

This is a brilliant antidote to the usual simplistic interpretations of imperialist adventures.

Hytner has nailed his own colours to the anti-war movement. This production, with a multiethnic cast and a black Henry V, reflects the political spirit of our times.

Shaun Doherty



meetings, forums and events | tel: 020 7538 5821 | e-mail: forums@swp.org.uk

IF YOUR AREA ISN'T SHOWN PHONE THE NUMBER ABOVE

Big ideas in informal settings

Marxist forums

BARNSELY What would a socialist society look like?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Barnsley Central Library, Shambles St.

BATH

Does the media control our minds? Sun 1 Jun, 4pm, Percy Community Centre, New King St.

BEDFORD

Is this the best democracy we can get?

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Landsdowne Rd.

BIRKENHEAD

Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Oxtou Green Community Centre, Christchurch Rd.

With Mark Krantz.

BIRMINGHAM HARBOURNE Report back from Evian

Tue 3 Jun, 7.30pm, Open University Centre, Harbourne High St.

BIRMINGHAM KING'S HEATH After the G8: what next for anti-capitalism?

Tue 3 Jun, 7.30pm, Dance Workshop, Mosley Rd.

BIRMINGHAM SMALL HEATH G8, war, famine: is another world possible?

Wed 11 Jun, 7pm, Small Heath Youth and Community Centre, Muntz St.

BOLTON

Confronting the new rulers of the world: the movement after Evian

Tue 17 Jun, 6.30pm, Bolton Town Hall (off Newport St).

BRIGHTON

Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Thu 12 Jun, 7.30pm, Phoenix Community Centre, Phoenix Place.

BURY

The US economy and the Project for the New American Century

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Arts and Crafts Centre, Broad St.

With Mike Killian.

CAMBRIDGE Karl Marx: the first anti-capitalist?

Thu 12 Jun, 7.30pm, CB2 Internet Cafe, Norfolk St.

CANTERBURY

Lenin: what can we learn from a man who made a revolution?

Thu 5 Jun, 5.30pm, Pascucci's Cafe, High St.

CARDIFF

Globalisation and resistance

Wed 11 Jun, 7pm, Glamorgan County Council Staff Club, Westgate St.

With Chris Bambery.

CHESTERFIELD

Is Britain a democracy?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Urban Education Centre, Assembly Hall, market place.

With Karen Reissman.

COLCHESTER

Lenin and the Russian Revolution

Mon 9 Jun, 8pm, RAD Hall, Southway.

COVENTRY

Karl Marx: the first anti-capitalist?

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Central Methodist Hall, town centre.

CRAWLEY

Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.

DARLINGTON

What can we learn from Lenin and the Russian Revolution?

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, Larchfield Centre, Larchfield St.

DERBY

Karl Marx: the first anti-capitalist?

Thu 29 May, 7pm, Infusion Cafe, Uttoxeter Rd.

DUDLEY

Do movements need political parties?

Wed 11 Jun, 8pm, Claughton Community Centre, Blowers Green.

GLOUCESTER

Is this the best democracy we can get?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Warehouse, Parliament St.

HUDDERSFIELD

Can Palestine be free?

Thu 5 Jun, 6pm, Coffeevolution, Church St.



Is parliament the best democracy we can get or could working people organise decisions much better? This is one of the questions discussed at Marxist forums this week. Picture: Jess Hurd www.reportdigital.co.uk

HULL Democracy: is this as good as it gets?

Thu 5 Jun, 7.15pm, Avenues Adult Education Centre, Park Ave. With Dave Hayes.

LEEDS CHAPELTOWN

Latin America in revolt: eyewitness report

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, West Indian Centre, Laycock Place.

LEEDS CITY CENTRE

Confronting the new rulers of the world: the movement after Evian

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Congreve Room, West Yorkshire Playhouse.

With Alex Callinicos.

LEEDS HEADINGLEY

Is fascism still a threat in 2003?

Thu 29 May, 6.30pm, Deli-Katessan, Hyde Park Corner.

LEICESTER

If money and missiles can cross borders, why not people?

Mon 2 Jun, 7.30pm, Cafe Mozart, London Rd.

LIVERPOOL AIGBURTH

Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Collect Gallery, Lark Lane.

LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE

Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.15pm, Magnet Cafe, Hardman St. With Joseph Choonara.

LOWESTOFT Does the media control our ideas?

Tue 3 Jun, 7.30pm, upstairs, Havelock, Love Rd.

With Rupert Mallin.

MANCHESTER CHEETHAM HILL How do we stop the Nazis?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Saffron Restaurant (bottom of Cheetham Hill Rd).

MANCHESTER CHORLTON Revolution and resistance in the Middle East

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Chorlton Public Library.

MANCHESTER HULME The resistible rise of Adolf Hitler

Tue 3 Jun, 7pm, Hulme Library, Sheffield Rd.

MANCHESTER LEVENSHULME Where is the Irish peace process going?

Thu 12 Jun, 7.30pm, Sultan Cafe, Stockport Rd.

With Kevin Orr.

MANCHESTER RUSHOLME

Confronting the new rulers of the world: the movement after Evian

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Jaffa Restaurant, Wilmslow Rd.

MARGATE

Lenin: what can we learn from a man who made a revolution?

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, Help Centre, Hawley Square.

NEATH If missiles can cross borders why can't people?

Thu 19 Jun, 7.30pm, Mocha Jo's Cafe (nr Safeway's fountain).

With John Duff.

NEWCASTLE HEATON Vietnam: when the US was humbled

Wed 4 Jun, 7pm, Trewitt Road Community Centre.

NEWCASTLE WEST What can we learn from Lenin and the Russian Revolution?

Thu 29 May, 7pm, Lynwood Business Centre, Lynwood Rd.

NORTHAMPTON Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Thu 29 May, 7pm, Cafe Msaada, Kettering Rd.

NORWICH

Report back from Evian

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, top floor, Hog in Armour, Charing Cross.

NOTTINGHAM SHERWOOD Revolt and resistance in Latin America

Tue 3 Jun, 7.30pm, Katmando, Mansfield Rd.

OXFORD CITY CENTRE Resisting corporate America

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Mitre, High St.

OXFORD EAST Drugs, disease and big business

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, East Oxford Community Centre, Cowley Rd.

With John Parrington.

PLYMOUTH WATERFRONT Does the movement need political parties?

Mon 9 Jun, 7.30pm, Cafe Marx, upstairs, Voodoo Lounge, Mayflower St.

PRESTON FRENCHWOOD Road map or dead end: can Palestine be free?

Tue 3 Jun, 7.30pm, Unity Centre, Shepherd St (off Church St).

ST ALBANS Palestine's future: road map or dead end?

Mon 2 Jun, 7.30pm, upstairs, Trinity Church (cnr Victoria St/ Beaconsfield Rd).

SCUNTHORPE Do Western workers benefit from Third World oppression?

Mon 9 Jun, 7.30pm, Central Community Centre, Lindum St.

With Chris Bambery.

SHEFFIELD HEELEY Globalisation and resistance

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Hartley Centre, Hartley St.

SHEFFIELD HILLSBOROUGH Who benefits from Third World oppression?

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Burton Street Project.

SHEFFIELD SHARROW Is there an alternative to capitalism?

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Highfields Library, London Rd.

SHEFFIELD WALKLEY Is fascism still a threat in 2003?

Thu 5 Jun, 7pm, Walkley Library.

SLOUGH

Palestine: road map or dead end?

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Slough Quakers, Ragstone Rd.

SOUTHAMPTON Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Thu 12 Jun, 8pm, Cook House, St Mary's St.

SUTTON COLDFIELD

Anti-capitalism: which way forward for the movement?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Room 631, Sutton College, Lichfield Rd.

WATFORD

How do we fight the Nazis?

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, The New & Labour Club, Woodford Rd.

With Yuri Prasad.

FORUMS IN LONDON

ACTON

How the West underdeveloped Africa

Tue 10 Jun, 7.30pm, West London Trade Union Club, High St.

BRICK LANE

Against the G8: a report back from Evian

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Coffee@Brick Lane.

BROMLEY

After Evian: is there an alternative to capitalism?

Mon 9 Jun, 7pm, United Reformed Church, Widmore Rd.

CALEDONIAN ROAD What makes a revolution?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Shillibeers, North Rd.

CLAPTON

Lenin: what can we learn from a man who made a revolution?

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Gulluoglu Bakery, Lower Clapton Rd.

CROYDON

Lenin: what can we learn from a man who made a revolution?

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, Spice Cafe, Surrey St.

DULWICH

The media: weapons of mass deception

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Goose Green Centre (cnr East Dulwich Rd/Addis Rd).

With Dave Franklin.

EAST HAM

Palestine: road map or dead end?

Thu 5 Jun, 7pm, Froud Centre, Taront Ave (off Romford Rd).

ENFIELD

Is this the best democracy we can get?

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Edmonton Green Leisure Centre, Plevna Rd.

With Keith Flett.

EUSTON

The US: a history of riots and rebellion

Wed 11 Jun, 7pm, Cafe Muse, Museum St.

FINSBURY PARK

Lenin: what can we learn from a man who made a revolution?

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Gadz Cafe, Clifton Terrace.

HAMMERSMITH

Malcolm X

Thu 12 Jun, 7.30pm, Cafe Mocha, Shepherd's Bush Rd.

With Kevin Ovenden.

HIGHBURY

Do Western workers benefit from Third World oppression?

Thu 29 May, 6.30pm, Stingray Cafe, Highbury Grove.

With Charlie Kimber.

HONOR OAK Democracy: is this the best it gets?

Thu 12 Jun, 7.30pm, Ackroyd Community Centre, Ackroyd Rd.

HOUNSLOW

Confronting the new rulers of the world: the movement after Evian

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Hounslow Community Centre, Montague Rd.

ILFORD

Road map or dead end: can Palestine be free?

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Cafe Noire, York Rd (nr Ilford ➡).

With Ayham Zekra.

KENTISH TOWN Martin Luther King and the politics of civil disobedience

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, Cafe Renoir, Kentish Town Rd.

With Martin Smith.

LADBROKE GROVE

Martin Luther King and the politics of civil disobedience

Tue 10 Jun, 7.30pm, Green Room, Paddington Arts Centre, Woodfield Rd.

LEWISHAM

Do all revolutions end in tyranny?

Wed 11 Jun, 7pm, Hunkarim (cnr Lee High Rd/ Marischal Rd).

LONDON FIELDS

Can we beat the multinationals?

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, Pasta Casa, Broadway Market.

NEW CROSS

Is there an alternative to capitalism?

Tue 3 Jun, 7pm, Moonbow Jake's Cafe, New Cross Rd.

PECKHAM

Who benefits from Third World oppression?

Wed 4 Jun, 7pm, Peckham Library, Peckham High St.

With Moira Nolan.

STAMFORD HILL After the local elections: how do we stop the BNP?

Thu 29 May, 7.30pm, Cyprus House Cafe, Manor Parade, Manor Rd.

STREATHAM

Weapons of mass deception: does the media control our ideas?

Wed 4 Jun, 7.30pm, Boogalu's, Sunny Hill Rd.

TOOTING

Palestine: road map to peace or dead end?

Wed 11 Jun, 7.30pm, Club Jasmine, 202 Upper Tooting Rd.

With Hassan Mahamdallie.

VICTORIA

Report back from Evian

Tue 10 Jun, 6.30pm, King's Arms, 77 Buckingham Palace Rd.

VICTORIA PARK

Does the media control our ideas?

Mon 2 Jun, 7.30pm, Mojo's Restaurant, Lauriston Rd.

WILLESDEN

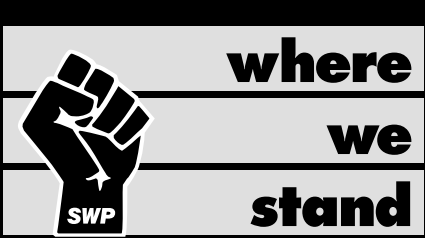
Lenin: a revolutionary for the 21st century

Thu 5 Jun, 7.30pm, Cafe Grafenola, Dudden Hill Lane (nr Dollis Hill ➡).

WOOLWICH

Third World oppression: who benefits?

Wed 4 Jun, 7pm, Friends Cafe, Bernard Close.



INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbians and gays.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

Join the socialists

Fill in this form and send it to PO Box 82, London E3 3LH

Name	E-mail
Address	
Postcode	
TU/college/school	Phone

Links

- Anti Nazi League  
www.anl.org.uk  
020 7924 0333  
Globalise Resistance  
www.resist.org.uk  
020 7053 2071  
Stop the War Coalition  
www.stopwar.org.uk  
020 7053 2153/4/5/6  
Socialist Alliance  
www.socialistalliance.net  
020 7791 3138  
Defend Council Housing  
www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk  
020 7987

## Solidarity key in journalists' strike

# Crucial battle at Newsquest

**A FIGHT between low paid journalists and a multinational corporation has reached a decisive stage this week.**

The Newsquest corporation is one of Britain's biggest owners of local newspapers, and is a subsidiary of the US multinational Gannett.

It is digging its heels in against journalists striking to win decent pay—contrary to popular myth most journalists are on very low pay.

This week staff at the Newsquest's Bradford titles are due to go on all-out strike in a fight that has become a crucial test for the National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

"Two steps forward and one step back," is how one NUJ activist described the latest developments in the Newsquest battle.

Journalists at Newsquest's Bolton and Bury titles last week called off their indefinite strike over pay after five weeks out.

Meanwhile staff at Newsquest titles in south London and north Kent kicked off their low pay campaign with a one-day strike on Friday of last week.

### Wave

But the Bradford strike will be critical, and not just for journalists working for Newsquest titles.

Last year staff at the Bradford titles went on a half-day strike and won salary increases of up to 14 percent.

That action sparked similar strikes and gains against Newsquest as well as at other newspaper groups around the country.

The wave of victories as the sharpest edge of a revival of union organisation in the media after years of union derecognition which has led to low pay and poor working conditions across the industry.

Now journalists at Newsquest papers have hit back and against the company's pathetic below-inflation pay increase of 2 percent—by going out all-out, not limited, action.

But Newsquest has dug its heels in—and if it succeeds in holding out it would be a signal to every other media company to do the same.

## Retreat in Bury and Bolton as workers go back

**JOURNALISTS AT the Bolton and Bury Newsquest titles voted by 30 to 19 to go back to work on Friday of last week. After five weeks many were beginning to feel they couldn't win.**

Money was also tight, despite good fundraising efforts. They decided to go back and



Bradford Newsquest workers have been on strike before—now they face a new challenge

Picture: S O'Neil

Equally, says Phil Turner, a longstanding NUJ activist, "If the Bradford journalists succeed, it will send a message to every employer that the union can finally win. And that we will come for them all and win back what we lost during the derecognition years."

"Even pay rates on the nationals are a lot less than they should be. Also it will make us think about how we organise

the union and go forward.

"Bradford NUJ members have shown a magnificent stand. They were the first to strike and set off a wave of industrial action."

But to win now, Phil argues, the NUJ plus other trade unionists need to get behind the Bradford strike.

"They are a strong union group, but they need solidarity. We have to pull the stops out right across the country.

"I would like to see this week the NUJ organising speaking tours for the strikers. Every NUJ chapel [workplace branch] in the country should be organising collections and inviting Bradford to speak, particularly at the national newspapers."

"We need to up the solidarity stakes nationally and the union should call for action in other sectors."

"This campaign is not just

about low pay but about how the NUJ goes forward.

"Big multinationals like Gannett will ride strikes out unless we show them the whole union is behind it."

■ **E-mail the Bradford strikers at [bradfordnuj@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bradfordnuj@yahoo.co.uk) or phone 0161 834 0240. Send donations to Newsquest Bradford NUJ Chapel, c/o NUJ, 22 Swan Street, Manchester M4 5JQ.**

Kate Coyne

Bolton and Bury chapel made links with local firefighters and Unison as well as sending people to speak to meetings in Preston, London, and Manchester.

"I think Bolton and Bury should have stayed out, but they also needed more support from the union," says Phil Turner.

"The last thing Gannett needs is two groups out at the same time. The 19 who voted to stay out will have to argue this with the others."

## PCS union elections

# A chance to change union

**Janice Godrich is the president of the PCS civil servants' union and a member of the Scottish Socialist Party.**

*She spoke to Socialist Worker about the upcoming elections to the union's national executive, which begin on Friday 6 June.*

*The socialist Left Unity group and the PCS Democrats group are standing a united list in an attempt to defeat the right wing Moderates group that has dominated the union.*



Janice Godrich

People realise that they need a leadership to campaign for national pay bargaining and against privatisation.

It is to Mark's credit that he's launched a campaign on these issues and to defend pensions.

We have been determined not to let the Moderates detract from implementing policies that would improve members' lives.

When Mark was elected in December 2000 PCS had 260,000 members—now we have 288,000. When a union prioritises recruitment and organisation people join.

The union has to go out to the members. Mark and I have prioritised this. We don't want a union top heavy with bureaucrats. We want all the resources directed to the front line where members need support.

I am not a career trade unionist—I have spent 18 out of 20 years combining my trade union activities with work in the civil service.

### Imagine

To win this election we must not be complacent. We have the best opportunity in a number of years to change the union. It will not be easy.

Everyone—the right wing, their allies in the media, government and movement—will be doing everything to discredit the left. They fear the policies we stand for.

The PCS has its first annual conference on 8 and 9 July. I'd like people to imagine what they'll feel like at that conference if the left has won a victory in the elections.

I'd also like them to imagine what they'll feel like if we haven't.

People have to argue in their branches to ensure that a recommendation goes out that members vote for the Democracy slate.

The elections last four weeks, so we have to keep campaigning right through the election period.

People should invite a speaker from the Democracy slate to their branch or office to galvanise support and maximise the vote in an area.

They should identify poorly organised workplaces and organise to leaflet them.

Let's win these elections and change members' lives for the better."

■ **The Left Unity website has resources and guidance for all PCS members who want to maximise the vote. Go to [www.voteleftunity.org.uk](http://www.voteleftunity.org.uk)**

• **THESE elections are very important because they give the members a chance to change the union.**

Over the last 12 months the misnamed Moderates have made every attempt to undermine our democratic processes.

They launched a coup against the elected general secretary Mark Serwotka in May of last year. They have tried to frustrate the union implementing conference policy.

These elections are only happening because members voted in a ballot to have annual elections and annual conferences. This vote overturned the recommendation of the union executive.

The elections are important, not just for the sake of winning, but for implementing fighting policy.

In the recent elections to the group executive committees, which represent members in different civil service departments, the left secured good results in the Department of Work and Pensions and the Inland Revenue.

These two groups make up around half of the union's membership.

John McGowan, a vice-president of the union and a key figure in the coup attempt, was defeated.

Members realised that they need a left leadership to secure decent pay, challenge privatisation and protect jobs.

What is paramount, in whatever election takes place, is that people have a socialist alternative to vote for.

Working people in Scotland have put their faith in New Labour for years. It is clear from the Scottish elections that when socialists stand on a serious and organised platform their policies get serious support.

Six SSP candidates standing against war, for peace and against privatisation were elected to the Scottish Parliament.

The lessons from that victory should be taken across Britain.

Recent elections across the trade unions, including Mark Serwotka's, are a sign that people are looking for an alternative to the established candidates.



## In brief

### Don't copy this sell-off example

COUNCIL WORKERS in uton from the TGWU, GMB nd Unison unions held a 40-strong protest of the council on hursday of last week.

Workers were protesting against plans to privatise the uilding, cleaning and printing epartments.

Jim Gregg, Unison branch ecretary, said, "These are loyal, edicated workers who after ears of operating under diffi- ult conditions are now finding hemselves outsourced."

Pitney Bowes is the pre- erred company from a range f bidders. It recently caused avoc when it pulled out of its ontract after the council re- used to agree to an increase in opying prices.

VIV SMITH

### 'Proud to be against racism'

S THE trial of refugees lamed for starting the fire at arls Wood detention centre ontinues, trade unionists are aising support.

Vince Dawes, a shop stew- rd and branch executive ember of Unison London ousing Association Branch, ecently won a £100 donation rom his branch to the Yarl's ood trial campaign.

"I arranged for the issues to e raised because so many as- ects of this case go straight to he heart of what we as trade nionists are fighting for," ince said.

"My union branch is proud f its tradition of fighting racism nd the persecution of asylum eekers by New Labour. Also entral to this case is the contin- ed privatisation of services hich puts lives at risk for the ake of profit."

The campaign is desperate or funds to cover the cost of he trial and to provide a basic evel of support and subsis- ence for those asylum seekers n trial.

**To contact the campaign phone 07786 517 379 or email sady\_campaign@yahoo.co.uk**

### Wide support for axing SATs tests

NTI-SATs campaigners in ingstanding, Birmingham, ound great support from local eople when they held a stall ast weekend.

We could really feel that lots f people in this working class rea backed our stand against he tests.

There will be a public eeting on 10 June with eakers including Carol yndon, the head teacher of ings Rise primary who was eatured in *Socialist Worker* ast week.

ANDY NORTH

### The prosecutor is called Mr Blair

IRMINGHAM STOP the ar Coalition supporters Paul illing and Margaret were ar- ested at a peaceful demon- tration against the illegal war n Iraq, at Fairford USAF ase, Gloucestershire.

They were later charged ith criminal offences for hich they face severe penal- ies. Rachael Milling reports, Paul and Margaret appeared n Gloucester Crown Court for plea and directions hearing.

"The judge directed that as here are at least two similar ases awaiting trial, their legal epresentatives should get to- egether with the CPS prosecutor rather disturbingly called Mr lair) in a month's time for an- ther hearing."

## Natfhe union conference

# Mood against war shapes a conference

**THE LEFT dominated the annual conference of Natfhe, the university and college lecturers' union.**

Delegates felt lifted by the recent experience of the anti-war movement.

This fed into overwhelm- ing opposition to New Labour's policies on every front and larger than usual meetings for Rank and File, Stop the War Coalition and the Socialist Alliance.

These fringe meetings at- tracted over 60 people each.

Michael Lavalette, newly elected Socialist Alliance councillor in Preston, spoke at the Socialist Alliance meeting, where there was huge debate.

Most people agreed the al- liance now had a real chance to grow.

Peter Jones from Burnley College spoke of the despair in the town that had led to the Nazi BNP's election successes.

He contrasted that with the hope offered by the Socialist Alliance victory in Preston, which is also in Lancashire.

During a conference debate speakers called for a massive trade union mobilisation to counter the BNP.

Delegates also resolved to maintain the union's support for the Stop the War Coalition.

The conference also agreed a motion to end the occupation of Iraq. An amendment was successfully added which called for Tony Blair to be re- placed as prime minister.

In the debates on the war Natfhe president Gerard Kelly called Bush and Blair's stated reasons for occupying Iraq "absolute crap".

### Plaster

General secretary Paul Mackney attacked Gordon Brown for giving a "blank cheque" for the war while re- stricting funds for education.

Mackney added, "If govern- ments underinvest in educa- tion or health the service begins to suffer. Those holding everything together with stick- ing plaster are set impossible targets and then blamed for failure while the corporate vul- tures circle overhead."

Delegates voted to send a delegation of ten members to the European Social Forum in November.

Every Natfhe activist can

use the energy of the anti-war movement to strengthen the union in their college in the other battles we face.

The conference divided in two to discuss issues in the fur- ther education (FE) and uni- versity (HE) sectors.

There was a major debate among FE delegates over how to ensure we get a far better deal over pay than we got after strike action was called off this year.

HE delegates voted to cam- paign against the govern- ment's white paper on universities. This will intro- duce top-up fees and pave the way for cuts and attacks in the name of modernisation.

Jeannie Robinson from the East Midlands spoke in practi- cal terms about building cam- paigns now over these threats.

There is also a major attack in the guise of job evaluation, which is being negotiated with employers over the summer.

The seemingly harmless scheme in fact opens the door to performance related pay.

Branches will have to start preparing for industrial action over the pay package.

**GEOFF BROWN and ROGER SMITH**

## Anti-war movement

ANTI-WAR movement teach- ins, discussion meetings and de- bates continue to attract large and enthusiastic audiences across Britain. Those which took place last week included:

**Edinburgh:** About 150 people attended a conference last weekend organised by the Edinburgh Stop the War Coalition and the Scottish Palestine Soli- darity Campaign.

The programme included sessions on "Afghanistan today", "Iraq today", "Israel, the Hijack State" and "De- pleted Uranium, a weapon of mass destruction".

The participants who in- cluded a large contingent from Edinburgh Youth, a school student organisation, found the weekend informative and inspiring.

**PAT SMITH**

**North London:** Anti-war cam- paigners from Camden came together for a successful day school last week to discuss the consequences of war in Iraq.

As well as discussions on the Middle East and Palestine, we also held workshops on the war on democracy, the Project for the New American Century, protest and strategy today and South America: resistance in Bush's backyard.

Campaigners of all back- grounds, ages and experiences came to the day school.

The most common theme of the day was the importance of continuing to extend the Stop the War Coalition.

We discussed continuing to campaign against the occupa- tion of Iraq and the "war on terror", and also reinforcing the local networks that have played a crucial role in mobilis- ing opposition to the war.

This led to discussions en-

couraging people to join our de- legation going to the Evian protests and about local activi- ties and meetings over the coming months.

We also discussed how we could mount a challenge to New Labour in next year's Greater London Assembly elections.

**SIMON UNDERWOOD and LIZ WHEATLEY**

**Hackney:** 20 people attended a meeting in London Fields against the occupation of Iraq on Thursday of last week. It included discussion of the

way forward for the anti-war movement.

**Birmingham:** 20 people at- tended a Stop the War Coal- ition video showing in King's Heath on Tuesday of last week.

The following night around 150 people attended a peace concert put on by the Coalition in a local folk music club to hear singer Julie Felix.

People want to continue or- ganising against the occupa- tion of Iraq and we plan more events.

**JANINE BRODERICK**

# Meetings with George Galloway

●**WILLESDEN:** The war on terror—the terror of war, Thursday 29 May, 7:30pm, Willesden Green Library Centre, 95 Willesden High Rd. With Robin (ISM) and Tublu Mukherjee (human rights lawyer).

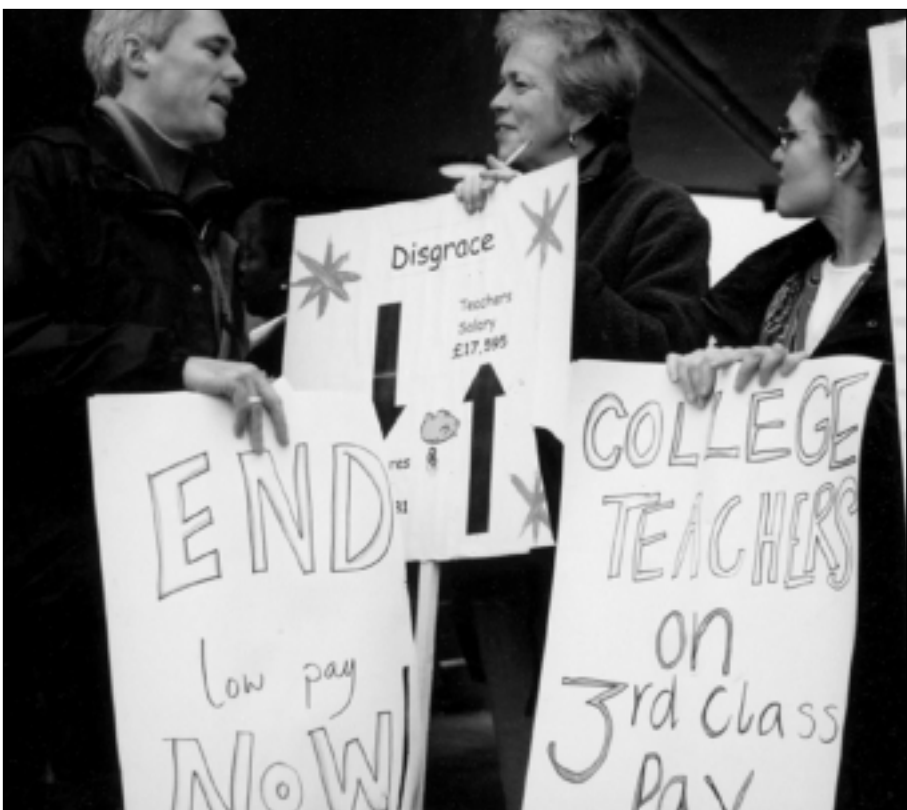
●**EALING:** No to the occupation of Iraq—justice for Palestine, Thursday 5 June, 7:30pm, Ealing Town Hall. With Abdul-Hadi Jiad and Balwinder Rana.

●**PRESTON:** End the occupation of Iraq—free- dom for Palestine, Saturday 7 June, 7pm, Restaurant Lounge, Guild Hall, Preston town centre. With John Rees (STWC) and Saed Ahmed (MAB).

●**WHITSTABLE:** War, lies and dissent, Wednes- day 11 June, 7:30pm, St Alpheds Infant School, Oxford Street. With Lindsey German (STWC) and Arram Rawf (Iraqi refugee).

●**PORTSMOUTH:** Has Iraq been liberated?, 7pm, Park Building, Tuesday 17 June, room 2.26, Uni- versity of Portsmouth, Guild Hall Square. With Lindsey German.

●**BRIGHTON** Propaganda, lies and dissent, Friday 20 June, 7pm, Brighton Helm Centre, North Road. With Lindsey German and Dr Ghayasuddin Sid- diqui (Muslim Parliament).



During the last year lecturers have been battling for better pay

Picture: Angela Stapleford

## Against the BNP

# Sandwell protest at BNP councillor

AROUND 80 people protested against the first council meet- ing of Nazi BNP councillor John Savage in Sandwell, West Midlands, on Wednesday of last week.

The protesters were mainly members of Sandwell Unison union.

Tony Barnsley, the assistant branch secretary of Sandwell Unison, said, "We think the BNP have conned their way into power by blaming asylum seekers.

"Our members, particularly our black and Asian members, feel threatened by the BNP. I will refuse to work for them and we are encouraging our

members to do the same."

Another BNP councillor failed to show up for the meeting.

□**A LIVELY Anti Nazi League (ANL) meeting took place in Cambridge on Monday of last week.**

Seymour Glass, from the band Miss Black America, Paul Clark, branch secretary of the Cambridge FB Union, and Anindya Bhattacharyya, from the ANL, spoke to about 30 people at Queen's College.

Anindya reminded the meeting that 230 Nazi candi- dates stood in the recent local elections, and that

"Burnley shows what hap- pens when you treat the BNP like an ordinary party. We need to rip off their mask of respectability."

Seymour, who has organ- ised several gigs under the Love Music Hate Racism banner, described the BNP as a "very sophisticated" party which had "mastered the language of the *Sun* and the tabloids".

A committee was formed for an ANL branch in Cam- bridge. The BNP has re- cently delivered leaflets in Chesterton, Cambridge and Ely.

**DEBBIE DAVIES**

## Plymouth nuclear project

# 'Ten leaking nuclear reactors in city'

OVER 70 protesters staged sit-downs outside the gates of the nuclear dockyard in Ply- mouth last Saturday.

The demonstrations fol- lowed news reports that HMS *Tireless*, a nuclear sub- marine based at Plymouth, was damaged after colliding with an iceberg.

More than ten "T" class submarines are based in Ply- mouth, all having the same design fault.

"It is like having ten leak- ing nuclear reactors in the middle of a city of 250,000 people," explained Pete Le Mare from the CND national committee.

This is the latest of a series of protests against the privatised nuclear base, owned by Kellogg, Brown & Root.

This is a subsidiary of US transnational Halliburton.

Brown & Root won a con- tract to service the Vanguard class submarines, which carry Trident multiple warhead nu- clear weapons and were re- cently deployed during the invasion of Iraq.

The demonstration in- cluded trade union support from Unison, CWU, Ply- mouth Trades Council and students from Plymouth University.

□**A PUBLIC campaign to defend the right to protest was launched following the arrest and charges brought against Tony Staunton and Pete Heddle during an earlier demonstration in Plymouth against the war.**

The two are now facing se- rious charges under the Public Order Act that carry prison sentences.

The trial is set for 23 June and a protest rally is planned outside Plymouth Magistrates' Court.

■**Send messages of support c/o Unison, 190 Armada Way, Plymouth PL1 1LD or fax 01752 661 108.**

**Saturday 31 May**  
●Stop privatisation—the case for council housing. Defend Council Housing national conference, 11am-4.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Liverpool. Phone 07951 156 881.

**Sunday 1 June**  
●Mass demo at G8 summit

in Evian, France, as part of a week of protests from Wednesday 28 May to Tuesday 3 June.

**Thursday 5 June**  
●Justice for Palestine, justice for international solidarity protesters. Picket 5.30pm-8.30pm, 10 Downing Street, London. Called by Palestine Solidarity Campaign and International Solidarity Movement.

**Sunday 8 June**  
●*Jeremy Hardy Versus the Israeli Army*, film showing and question and answer session, 8pm, Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon

Street, London. For tickets phone 020 7388 8822.

**Saturday 21 June**  
●Stop the War Coalition conference.

**Saturday 28 June**  
●Stop the SATs. Conference for all parents, governors and teachers, 11.30am-3.30pm, South Camden Community School, Charrington Street, London.

**Friday 4-Friday 11 July**  
●Marxism 2003, central London. A week of debates, forums and meetings organised by the Socialist Workers Party.



## Postal workers

# Vote shows desire for a fighting union

**TONY BLAIR'S candidate for a top position in the postal workers' CWU union was soundly defeated last week.**

John Keggie, a member of Labour's national executive, was defeated by Dave Ward for the post of deputy general secretary (postal). This is the position which Keggie presently holds.

Keggie took 16,814 votes—ward won 19,404.

"There was cheering on the voting floor when the result came through," says an Oxfordshire postal worker. Keggie has negotiated some often deals and is in bed with Blair. I'm yet to be convinced that Ward is any great shakes. At he's not Keggie.

"I look forward to seeing Keggie doing 5am starts at a delivery office again."

This is the second time Keggie has been humiliated. He was expected to win the leadership of the CWU two years ago but was defeated by the left's candidate, Billy Hayes.

He would have been confident of hanging on to his position this time.

But he lost because he is associated with the "partnership" agenda of working with the management and of cuddling up to New Labour over the war against Iraq and much else.

The vote is a sign that postal workers want a more aggressive union response to Blair and the bosses.

The results for the rest of the national executive showed that, although some members had voted as recommended by geographically-based "regional blocs", others had voted in the record and politics of the candidates.

*Socialist Worker* supporter Anne Loftus was re-elected to the executive, coming third out of the 13 successful candidates.

Jane told *Socialist Worker*, "Some people voted for candidates because they were from the north or the south of Britain."

"I won votes from all areas because people agree we need united fightback to win better pay and conditions for all postal workers."

by CHARLIE KIMBER

"That means £4,000 London weighting and higher basic pay."

"I have also fought for greater accountability of the executive to the membership and against New Labour's policies such as the war against Iraq."

There are four big issues for postal workers at the CWU union conference, which begins this weekend:

●Relations with New Labour: A series of motions call for changes to the present use of the political fund.

Unfortunately because of the way the debate has been organised the real alternative—to democratise the fund and use it as members wish—may not be heard.

Delegates should insist that it is.

●London weighting: London workers have voted 99 percent for action over weighting in an unofficial ballot.

That needs to be turned into action—and quickly.

If the union's national leaders won't start a real fight then it will have to be done unofficially.

●Delivery changes: Royal Mail last week announced its financial results were 38 percent better than last year—and that 16,000 jobs have gone in the process.

Now many more job cuts are threatened through the introduction of a single delivery and other speed-up measures.

This was reported in the press as "£20 a week extra for postal workers". But the £20 is a performance-based maximum which very few offices would be able to reach.

The proposed deal could also enshrine earlier starts



London postal workers show they want to fight for better pay

Picture: Socialist Worker

and, in some areas, workers doing three delivery "walks" instead of their present one.

Management is deadly serious about forcing through big changes.

Post Office chairman Allan Leighton said last week, "The task this year is to make the necessary changes in mail deliveries and transportation that will deliver the large cost savings essential for future profits."

Adam Crozier, the new chief executive of Royal Mail, added, "We've got to not just maintain the momentum of change, but to increase the pace. I'm confident that we can move into profit this

current financial year."

The union leaders, in particular the new deputy general secretary Dave Ward, should stop making concessions and start fighting over jobs.

They should not accept the bosses' logic that the only way to get better pay is to sell conditions and slash staff.

●Privatisation: recent moves by the government-appointed regulator will enable private firms to collect mail in the big cities and the dump it with Royal Mail to deliver across Britain at a knockdown price.

This means companies do the easy and profitable bit and get the public network to do the hard and costly bit.

The union must oppose all privatisation moves.

□IN A crazy victory for profit over the environment, safety and public health, the Post Office is selling off its underground railway system in London.

The line, which is separate from the main tube network, is used to move 3.4 million mailbags a week. It was opened 75 years ago to combat London's traffic congestion.

That wise move is beyond the understanding of today's bosses.

Royal Mail will now shift all its mail through London by road "to cut costs".

## Civil servants

## Tax credit chaos sparks a walkout

HUNDREDS OF Inland Revenue workers in the PCS civil servants' union unofficially walked out of their offices for 15 minutes on Friday of last week.

The workers were protesting against the crisis caused by the government's new tax credit programme which left Britain's poorest families waiting for vital money.

The chaos has led to a massive increase in workloads and stress for Inland Revenue workers. There were nine million calls in one day to contact centres.

The workers walked out in East Kilbride, Coatbridge, Dunfermline, Sunderland and

Manchester.

This followed an angry debate at the Inland Revenue PCS group conference earlier in the week.

"Our members have pulled out all the stops to make sure that claimants receive their payments as quickly as possible," says Graham Steel, PCS national officer.

"They understand that the people lodging claims desperately require the payments and are sympathetic to their frustration."

"Staff have staged these spontaneous protests because they feel they are not receiving the support they deserve from management."

## Home Office

OVER 300 civil servants struck for half a day in Liverpool on Friday of last week. The PCS union members, who work for the Home Office, are angry at appalling working conditions and the shoddy computer system.

A lively picket line was maintained from 7am till noon. Workers at Litherland House in Bootle said that the office, originally designed for 200, now holds nearly 350 people.

One worker said, "People often try to get out of working here as soon as they can."

"The temperature in here can go above 80 degrees and the air conditioning fails us. Maggots fall on our

desks from the ceiling!"

Strikers know they are in a potentially very strong position as all Home Office staff have their wages put through the Liverpool office.

Pickets also told of how the privatised computer system constantly becomes inoperable and infuriates them.

Talks with management were held on Friday afternoon. Union officials say that the Home Office is not taking their claims seriously.

Pickets were determined that the Home Office solves all of the problems. The common feeling was that bosses will only listen to more hard-hitting action.

## Department of Work and Pensions

LAST WEEK'S PCS civil servants' union Department of Work and Pensions group conference followed a massive shift to the left in the group executive elections. The Left Unity group now has a 32 to four majority.

There is no doubt that the left is going to be severely tested in the coming year as New Labour attempts to take on the PCS as a first step to imposing its plans for "welfare" US-style.

PCS have submitted a pay claim for a minimum increase of £1,200 and an end to all performance related pay.

The employer seems certain to respond with an offer that does nothing to alleviate poverty pay for administration

grades, and bases executive grade increases almost entirely on performance.

To let the bosses get away with this would be catastrophic. The new appraisal system signals their intention to introduce individual pay next year, marginalising the PCS.

Conference was in the mood to fight not only over pay, but also over staffing cuts and attacks on conditions.

Activists will expect the left leadership to lead from the front. The campaign needs to start now, fighting on individual issues and linking them to New Labour's attack on workers' rights and the welfare state.

**PHIL PARDOE, group executive committee member (personal capacity)**

## Council workers

ROUND 140 council manual workers, members of the GWU and GMB unions, met on Wednesday of last week in central Manchester to discuss resistance to the imposition of new contracts by Manchester City Council.

Hundreds of cleaners and street scene" workers face new duties and the loss of weekend working pay enhancements.

Personnel boss Jon Redfern boasts he will "play the numbers game" to wear down resistance.

TGWU and GMB branch leaders sent out a clear message to their members at the mass meeting—don't sign the new contracts, refuse the new duties.

TGWU members have voted even to one in an indicative all out for industrial action. One GMB member said, "The unions would be finished if we don't make a stand on this—

members are furious."

The new contracts follow recent talks on implementing a deal that means all staff would eventually be on the same terms of pay and conditions.

Unison union members recently voted 1,150 to 220 to accept an interim package which promised a phased reduction of the working week.

But the smaller unions opposed the deal because there are serious worries about loss of pay protection for redeployed staff, as well as about the attacks on manual workers.

A number of cleaners under attack are members of Unison.

TGWU and GMB leaders must campaign for action to defend the first members who receive and refuse the new contracts. Unison activists have started to raise support and solidarity amongst white-collar workers.

## Birmingham Pride

## Vibrant political party

A FANTASTICALLY well attended Birmingham Gay Pride 2003 last weekend celebrated cultural and sexual diversity once more with tremendous verve and great style.

The weekend was great fun, kicking off with a traditional march from the city centre and continuing with a vibrant street party, market and fairground attractions.

There was also a strong political atmosphere and many revellers were concerned by the Nazi BNP's recent council gains.

There was a highly successful Anti Nazi League stall presenting a united front against the BNP.

This found a great awareness that disenchantment with New Labour has led to a

rise in fascist groups and racial violence.

We were all heartened by the commitment shown by people who were eager to get involved in forthcoming events and actions.

*Socialist Worker* supporters leafleted, petitioned and discussed "Pride Not Profit"—following London Pride's overly commercial tone.

Activists highlighted how the New Labour government's failure to revoke the bigoted Section 28 in schools can only perpetuate prejudice and confusion in society.

Birmingham Pride remains a free festival and working to maintain this was at the forefront of people's minds.

**GEOFF DEXTER and ROBIN WEAVER**

## Hanson Brick

HUNDREDS OF workers for Hanson Bricks, Britain's biggest brick producer, are set to take strike action in a dispute over pay.

The workers, in the TGWU, Amicus and GMB unions, have voted overwhelmingly to strike. The first strike is set for Monday 9 June. The second day of action is set for Monday 16 June.

Bob Blackman, the TGWU national officer, told *Socialist Worker*, "The company has offered a 2.7 percent pay increase. That is derisory in the current climate."

"It has also reneged on an additional day's holiday agreed last year."

"This is the lowest offer I've dealt with. We will be planning industrial action strategy over the coming weeks."

The new issue of **RedWatch**, the rank and file paper for firefighters and control room staff, is out now.

It leads on the opposition to the pay deal being recommended by firefighters' leaders.



Order your copy of **RedWatch** from 07973 521 594 or 07939 021 094.



# Socialist Worker

## United call for action to halt growth of BNP

### NURSERY NURSES, HEALTH WORKERS



Anger on the streets—striking nursery nurses sweep through Glasgow

Picture: Duncan Brown

# Low paid in revolt

**SOME OF the lowest paid workers in Britain are rebelling.**

Nursery nurses in Scotland and health workers in North Lincolnshire and east London were set to strike this week for a living wage.

They are sick of doing important, caring jobs for pitiful wages that won't pay the bills.

They want to be treated with respect, not taken for granted as low paid skivvies.

In Scotland up to 5,000 nursery nurses took part in a series of strikes last week. Many were due to strike again this week.

The strikes have so far hit over 400 council-run nurseries.

The workers, members of the Unison union, are battling for a £4,000 a year pay rise and a 35-hour week.

Nursery nurses currently start on just £10,000 a year—and that's after they have

taken a two-year childcare qualifying course.

Even when they reach the top of the pay scale, they still only get £13,800 a year.

One of those involved in the action is Liz McCulloch, a nursery nurse in Kilmarnock.

She told *Socialist Worker*, "Nursery nurses' pay is absolutely scandalous. We are undervalued and underpaid.

"I get the top rate of £13,800 a year. Under the local authorities' recent job evaluation I could find myself £500 a year worse off.

"If you're a nursery nurse and a single parent you have to claim benefits. Many do two jobs.

"A lot of people are shocked at how little we get, they think we get the same as teachers.

"We are not berating what other professionals get, we are saying give us a piece of the action.

"People sometimes think

we're just away playing with wains. But it's a very responsible job.

"Often we're looking after very disadvantaged children which adds to the physical and mental strain.

"Strike action was the last resort, but the response we've had has been fantastic—from nursery nurses, parents and the EIS teachers' union."

#### Firms

Health workers have also taken up the battle against low pay this week.

New Labour wants private multinational firms to run more and more of the NHS.

Domestics, porters, catering workers, transport and other ancillary workers who have been contracted out know the cost.

Private firms make profits by slashing staff pay and working conditions.

But now three of these

firms face a revolt.

This week ancillary workers in the North Lincolnshire and Goole NHS trust were resuming the fight against their bosses Carillion (£42.4 million profits last year).

The 300-plus mainly women workers have already taken several days strike action to win £5.03 an hour and equality with NHS staff.

Against the advice of their local union officials, they threw out an offer from Carillion of between £4.60 and £4.85 an hour.

The workers at three hospitals, in Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Goole, were set to strike for five days.

In east London ancillary workers at Whipps Cross hospital were also set to strike for two days this week against ISS Mediclean (£5 million profits last year).

Some of these workers earn as little as £4.42 an hour.

Last week they rejected the firm's new offer of £5 an hour and promises of a move to NHS terms and conditions.

They are determined to stick out for £5.53 an hour and for a guaranteed end to the two-tier workforce.

Len Hockey, joint branch secretary of the local Unison branch, says, "The majority of the workers involved are women and many work long hours, often holding down more than one job.

"These are workers who have not previously been organised and who are new to trade union activity. But now they are taking up the fight for the NHS."

Unfortunately Unison officials at nearby Homerton University Hospital suspended a strike, which was also due to start this week, while they consulted on the offer from ISS Mediclean.

Workers at Mile End and St Clements Hospitals are set

to join the pay rebellion and to strike next week against their employers, Medirest.

Many of the east London workers come from immigrant backgrounds, but have overcome language barriers and pressure from management to fight for their rights.

Everyone should get behind the nursery nurses and health workers, and help make this the beginning of an even bigger rebellion.

Hazel Croft

**■ Send messages of support and donations: Scunthorpe: Unison Office, General Hospital, Scunthorpe DN15 5BH. Cheques payable to Scunthorpe health branch hardship fund.**

**East London: Unison Office, Mile End Hospital, Bancroft Road, London E1 4DG or e-mail Jim.Fagan@thpct.nhs.uk Cheques payable to the East London Healthworkers Solidarity Fund**

**THE THREAT** posed by 16 British National Party (BNP) councillors in Britain has united anti-Nazi campaigners in a call for demonstrations on Saturday 28 June.

Protests are planned in Burnley, Broxbourne, Halifax and Tipton—places where the BNP have conned people into voting for them.

The continuing danger from the BNP was shown in a by-election in Walsall last week where the BNP stood for the first time and came second with 746 votes—26 percent of the vote.

The high profile figures urging people to join the demonstrations against the BNP include union leaders John Edmonds of the GMB, Tony Dubbins (GPMU) and Mark Serwotka (PCS).

Other signatories include Manchester United Football club, the band Heartless Crew, Labour executive member Shahid Malik and Labour MPs John Cryer, Harry Cohen and Jeremy Corbyn.

They have added their names to a statement designed to gather people from different political backgrounds who are opposed to the Nazis.

It reads, "We are urging you to join us in Burnley, Tipton, Broxbourne and Halifax to rally against the Nazis. The British National Party, whose members sieged as they won seats, are now the second largest party on Burnley Council, with eight seats.

"The day after the election, an Indian takeaway was firebombed.

"Today's fascists hope to build on their high votes to gain MEPs in next year's elections. They want to follow in the footsteps of Le Pen, Haider and Fini.

"We must stop them now before it's too late.

"The aim of the BNP is 'an all-white society' states its leader Nick Griffin. He also says that 'Anyone of European origin is white and similar to Britons... Europeans are fine, but the line stops there.'

"The BNP have exploited people's distrust and disillusionment with official politics, using the media hysteria over asylum seekers to build on racism.

"The past year has afforded the BNP an unacceptable degree of respectability and normalisation. The local media swoons over their every stunt and there is little or no opposition from local councils where Nazis have been elected.

"It's time to take a stand against the Nazis. Join us to defend our multiracial, multi-faith and multicultural society. We are the majority—black and white united against race hatred and division."

The unity demonstrations on 28 June are an important chance for anti-Nazis to show their determination not to let the BNP grow.

**■ To sign the statement and find out details of the demonstrations contact Unity, c/o the Anti Nazi League, PO Box 2566, London N4 1WJ. Phone 020 7924 0333**

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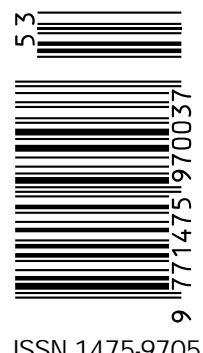
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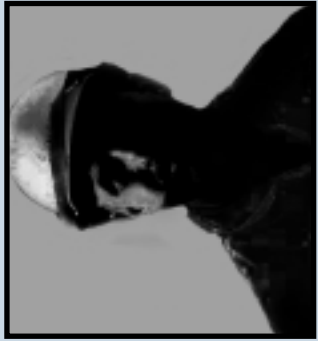
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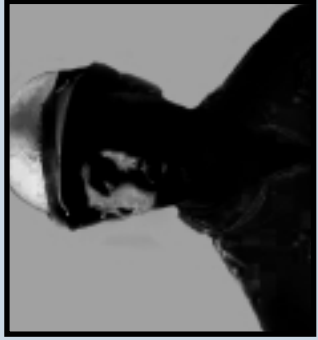
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31 March  
MICHAEL DAVIS  
Died days before retiring when  
he fell from a roof in Morden,  
south London.



8 April  
DANIEL DENNIS  
Fell through a roof light in  
North Wales.



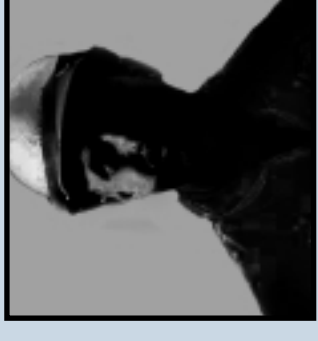
10 April  
JOHN DORAN  
Died after a trench collapsed  
while working for MJ O'Connor  
Ltd in Gwent.



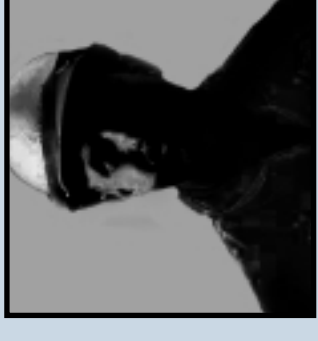
11 April  
DANNY LEIGHTON  
Died following a scaffold  
tower collapse at Cossington,  
Leicestershire.



16 April  
BRIAN GIBSON  
Run over while working for MJ  
Gleeson at Leeds University.



17 April  
ANDREW THOMAS  
Killed while delivering  
plasterboard to a site in  
Caldercott, South Wales.



26 April  
RONALD WILSON  
Killed when a crane fell on  
him near the ASD in  
Staffordshire.



29 April  
SLAWMIR KOCON  
Killed when he was hit by a  
chimney flue in Northwood,  
near Hillingdon.



29 April  
GEORGE ROGERS  
Killed when thrown from a  
dumper truck in Salisbury.



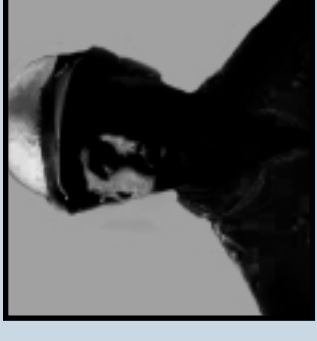
29 April  
JACK TOWEY  
Run over by a skip lorry at a  
construction works on the  
A13, Barking, Essex.



1 May  
PAUL ROSS  
Died after a fall at the  
Channel Tunnel Rail Link in  
Grays, Essex.



2 May  
SHANE NEIL  
Crushed to death by a forklift  
truck while working for  
Wellwood Roofing Services at  
the Building Research  
Establishment, Bedford.



5 May  
KEITH JONES  
Died after a fall on a site in  
Leominster, Herefordshire.



11 May  
MARK WALKER  
Electrocuted while working for  
Daubney Services Ltd at  
Milburn Gate House, Durham.

# FOURTEEN DEAD. NOTHING SAID

*Fourteen construction workers were killed in the course of duty during April and May. Yet there was no outcry in the national press. Helen Shooter investigates*